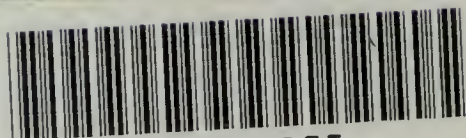




BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN



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Benj.^a Franklin

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,

“DOER OF GOOD:”

A BIOGRAPHY.

“His country’s friend, but more of human kind.”

EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM P. NIMMO.

[1867]

B2P (Franklin) (2)



PREFACE.



THE name of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN is one of the most illustrious in American history, and the story of his life one of the most interesting and instructive which can be placed in the hands of youth. Whether as a tradesman, an author, a philanthropist, a politician, a philosopher, or a statesman, nearly every circumstance and act of his life is capable of yielding instruction worthy to be borne in mind and imitated; and his fame, which increases by the lapse of time, is an honour to the land of his birth, and to the age in which he lived. "I have always," he wrote on one occasion, "set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good*, than on any other kind of reputation," and his whole life was an embodiment of this remark.

During 1771, while Franklin was in his sixty-fifth year, he commenced to write his *Autobiography*, an account of his early life, which he did in the form of letters to his son, who was at that time Governor of the State of New Jersey.

He continued the narrative to the time of his marriage, in his twenty-sixth year, but circumstances then compelled him to lay it aside for thirteen years. In 1784, urged by the repeated solicitations of his friends, he resumed the *Autobiography*, and ultimately brought it down to his fifty-first year; when he was again interrupted by being deputed to go to London as representative for Pennsylvania. He could not prevail upon himself, however, to continue his memoir further, and he abruptly broke it off at nearly the most important period of his life, namely, the commencement of his European career. This work is considered to be one of the best specimens of the autobiographical style of composition which has been written, and gives in homely, but elegant, English the plain, unvarnished story of his early years, told in a manner which charms every reader. This work has been before the public in every variety of form since 1793, and is a book which every young man should make himself acquainted with.

James Parton, the latest and best biographer of Franklin, while admitting the excellence and rare merit of the *Autobiography*, says of it, however, that it "gives agreeable information respecting a sagacious shopkeeper of Philadelphia, but it has little to impart to us respecting the said Franklin, the world's Franklin, the philosopher, the statesman, the philanthropist;" and in the compilation of the present volume this idea has been kept in view, and a narrative of the life of the illustrious Franklin, from his birth to

his death, has been prepared from the memoirs of two of his most able biographers. The result is that this volume is a picture of the man as seen by others, and not as seen by himself, and a better opportunity is thus afforded to the reader of forming an impartial opinion of the character of this eminent friend of his country.

The present volume has been carefully condensed and edited from the celebrated *Life* by Jared Sparks,* and the more recent and extensive *Life and Times* by James Parton.†

* *The Life of Benjamin Franklin*; containing the Autobiography, with Notes and a Continuation. By Jared Sparks. 8vo. Boston, 1857.

† *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*. By James Parton. 2 vols. 8vo. New York. 1864.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS IN BOSTON.

 JOSIAH FRANKLIN, father of Benjamin Franklin, the illustrious statesman, patriot, and philosopher of America, the story of whose eventful life is recounted in the following pages, was born at Ecton, Northamptonshire, England, in 1655. He adopted the trade of a dyer in his youth, and afterwards established himself in the same business at Banbury, Oxfordshire, and was married there, about the twenty-first year of his age. His brother Benjamin married, at the same town, the daughter of a clergyman. These two brothers, apprenticed and wedded in Banbury, were brothers indeed ; they cherished for each other an affection which time and distance never cooled. Three children were born to Josiah in Banbury : Elizabeth, born 1678 ; Samuel, born 1681 ; and Hannah, born 1683.

Charles II. was king of England then ; the mean and profligate corrupter of his realm ; promoter of false priests and persecutor of honest ones. Josiah Franklin and Benjamin, his well-beloved, and they alone, as it appears, of all their

family, espoused the cause of the expelled pastors, abandoned the Church of England, and attended the Conventicles. The Conventicles were forbidden by law, were often disturbed, and to attend them placed a tradesman under the ban of the class whose good will was most advantageous to him. About the year 1685, Josiah Franklin bade farewell to his brother Benjamin, and to England; and, with wife and three little children, emigrated to Boston, accompanied by a number of his neighbours and fellow-dissenters.

Upon reaching Boston, then in the fifty-sixth year of its existence, and containing but five or six thousand inhabitants, Josiah Franklin, finding little encouragement to practise his trade of dyer, set up in the business of tallow-chandler and soap-boiler.

A moderate prosperity rewarded his diligence and skill in Boston. His family, too, rapidly increased. August 23, 1685, was born a son, Josiah, who afterwards grieved his father so keenly by running away to sea, and was not heard of for many years, and who almost lured away, by his example, his youngest brother, Benjamin. Ann followed, born January 5, 1687. Then Joseph, born February 6, 1688, who died in infancy. Next another Joseph, born June 30, 1689. Soon after the birth of their seventh child, when Josiah Franklin was thirty-five years old, his wife died, leaving to his care six children, the eldest being eleven years of age.

A young man, in such circumstances, with nothing but his own industry to depend upon for the support of his little brood, must make haste to find another mother for them. Josiah Franklin did so. He could not wait the customary year, but married so soon after the death of his

wife, that the first child of his second spouse was born eighteen months after the birth of his first wife's last. His choice fell upon Abiah, youngest daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of the Island of Nantucket. Abiah Folger was twenty-two years of age when she gave her hand to the tallow-chandler of the Blue Ball.

Of Peter Folger we may truly say, that he was worthy to be the grandfather of Benjamin Franklin. He is described by a contemporary as "a learned and godly Englishman," who acquired some of the Indian languages, and was much employed in teaching the Indian youth to read and write ; well skilled also in surveying, and thus of great use to the colony in marking boundaries and laying out settlements.

In 1676 he also greatly distinguished himself in staying the persecution, then prevalent against the Baptists and Quakers, and in endeavouring to secure for them those rights of citizenship, of which they had long been defrauded.

A tallow-chandler of thirty-five, with six young children, would have been an ill match for a young lady of twenty-two, the daughter of an honoured scholar, if that tallow-chandler had not been a man to make it worth a woman's while to undergo, for his sake, unusual care and toil. Josiah Franklin was handsome, agreeable, accomplished, and wise. He was of medium stature, well formed, very strong, agile, and expert. His "limbs were made in England." He could draw prettily, had some skill in playing the violin, and his voice in singing was sonorous and pleasing. At the close of the day, when his labour was done, he would take his violin and accompany himself while he sang to his family the homely songs and hymns of his native land. The melody of his voice and violin sounded pleasantly through all the long life of his son, who

recalled those evening scenes at home to the last of his days. He had an active, inquiring, genial mind, loved to see intelligent friends at his table, and took great pleasure in conversation. Known to be a prudent, sincere, and friendly man, his advice was much sought by his neighbours, as well as by leading men concerned in the affairs of the town and the church. He was a genuine man, blithe, prudent, and steadfast. So Abiah Folger took him, and her share of his responsibilities.

Ten children were the fruit of their union : John, born in December 1690 ; Peter, born November 22, 1692 ; Mary, born September 22, 1694 ; James, born February 4, 1697 ; Sarah, born July 9, 1699 ; Ebenezer, born September 20, 1701, who died in infancy ; Thomas, born December 7, 1703 ; BENJAMIN, born January 6, (old style,) 1706 ; Lydia, born August 3, 1706 ; Jane, born March 27, 1712, the pet and beauty of the family, Benjamin's favourite sister, his correspondent for sixty years.

Franklin was born on a Sunday. The family lived then in Milk Street, within twenty yards of the church door. So the thankful father carried his new-born son across the street the same day, and had him baptized by the pastor, Dr Willard. He named him Benjamin, in honour of his brother over the sea, the dycr of Leicester Fields. The record of his birth in the town register, and that of his baptism on the books of the Old South Church, are still to be seen.

Soon after the birth of Benjamin, his father removed to a house at the corner of Hanover and Union Streets, where he lived the rest of his life. It was a small, but decent and comfortable, dwelling of wood.

It is an advantage to a child to be reared in a numerous

family. There is less danger of his being spoiled. There are more to love him, and he has more to love. He learns early to consider himself as only one person among many, and he is constantly reminded that others, as well as himself, have feelings, desires, and rights. Benjamin Franklin could recollect seeing twelve brothers and sisters at his father's table, all of whom grew to maturity and became parents. Both he and his sister Jane bore testimony to the happiness of their early home. "It was, indeed, a lowly dwelling," wrote she, "we were brought up in, but we were fed plentifully, made comfortable with fire and clothing, had seldom any contention among us; but all was harmony, especially between the heads, and they were universally respected."

Josiah Franklin, on the whole, prospered well in Boston: not so his brother Benjamin, whom he had left behind him in England. Benjamin was a man of many homely gifts and graces, abounding in love for his friends and relatives; but he wanted greatly that decision of character and strength of mind, so necessary at all times to possess, but more particularly so, in times of political disquiet, to enable him properly to maintain his own position; and, as his nephew afterwards said, "he was too much of a politician for his own good." Domestic misfortune overtook him; he lost successively his wife and nine children, and his worldly affairs also were not in a prosperous condition. However, he was of a cheerful temperament, and kept a stout heart through all his privations, finding solace in reading such literature as came within his grasp. He was a great collector of pamphlets and sermons; and much addicted to singing doggerel songs of his own composition, on the political events of his period. Bereaved of wife,

children, and friends, Uncle Benjamin heard with great satisfaction that there was a namesake of his own in his brother's family on the other side of the ocean, and he took great interest in the early life of the boy. The two brothers corresponded regularly ; the home incidents of each were duly chronicled in the domestic epistles ; and Uncle Benjamin occasionally wrote rough rhymes to his little nephew, and it is in these that we find the first glimpses of the boy's life.

There were frequent movements of troops, arrivals of armed fleets, and erection of defensive works, at Boston during the childhood of Franklin ; England and France being then at war, and Canada a French province. Benjamin, it seems, took the interest in such proceedings which boys always do ; and this being duly reported to Uncle Benjamin, caused him to indite a few lines for his nephew's warning, which he inclosed in his next letter to America. Benjamin was four years and a half old when his father read the lines, "Sent to him," so Uncle Benjamin wrote, "upon a report of his inclination to martial affairs :"—

"Believe me, Ben, it is a dangerous trade ;
The sword has many marr'd as well as made ;
By it do many fall, not many rise—
Makes many poor, few rich, and fewer wise ;
Fills towns with ruin, fields with blood ; beside
'Tis sloth's maintainer, and the shield of pride.
Fair cities, rich to-day in plenty flow,
War fills with want to-morrow, and with woe.
Ruin'd estates, the nurse of vice, broke limbs and scars,
Are the effects of desolating wars."

Only eight days after writing these lines, Uncle Benjamin, who probably sent something, in prose or verse, to his little nephew by every ship, wrote an acrostic on his name,

which consisted of the good advice which uncles of that age were accustomed to give their nephews:—

“ Be to thy parents an obedient son ;
Each day let duty constantly be done :
Never give way to sloth, or lust, or pride,
If free you 'd be from thousand ills beside ;
Above all ills be sure avoid the shelf
Man's danger lies in, Satan, sin, and self.
In virtue, learning, wisdom, progress make ;
Ne'er shrink at suffering for thy Saviour's sake.

“ Fraud and all falschood in thy dealings flee,
Religious always in thy station be ;
Adore the Maker of thy inward part,
Now 's the accepted time, give Him thy heart ;
Keep a good conscience, 'tis a constant friend,
Like judge and witness this thy acts attend ;
In heart with bended knee, alone, adore
None but the Three in One for evermore.”

Young Benjamin derived only a very insignificant portion of his preliminary education at school. He was educated by his father, by the influences of a good mother and a happy home, by the events of his time, by his father's books and friends, and, not least, by the valuable and valued precepts of his uncle Benjamin.

Frequent arrivals of verse from Uncle Benjamin inspired the boy, at length, to attempt a return in kind. At the age of seven, he wrote something, perhaps a letter, with a few lines of doggerel, which called forth a joyful response from his uncle:—

“ 'Tis time for me to throw aside my pen,
When hanging sleeves read, write, and rhyme like men ;
This forward spring foretells a plenteous crop,
For, if the bud bear grain, what will the top !
If plenty in the verdant blade appear,
What may we not soon hope for in the ear !

When flowers are beautiful before they 're blown,
What rarities will afterwards be shown !
If trees good fruit un'noculated bear,
You may be sure 'twill afterward be rare.
If fruits are sweet before they 've time to yellow,
How luscious will they be when they are mellow !
If first year's shoots such noble clusters send,
What laden boughs, Engedi-like, may we expect in end !”

The quickening and educating effect upon a boy of such a correspondence as this, continued until he was nine years old, would be noticeable if the boy were a blockhead ; how great its value to a young Franklin, large-brained, inquisitive, humorous ! It was much for him even to know that there was a good old man in old England who cared for him.

One incident of Franklin's childhood is familiar to all the world. “When I was a child of seven years old,” he wrote, sixty-six years after the event, “my friends, on a holiday, filled my pockets with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children ; and being charmed with the sound of a *whistle*, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my whistle, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth ; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money ; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation ; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure.

“This, however, was afterward of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind ; so that often, when I was

tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *Don't give too much for the whistle*; and I saved my moncy."

An anecdote is preserved of Benjamin's minnow-fishing days. There was a marsh in the outskirts of Boston, on the edge of which the boy and his friends used to fish at high tide for minnows. By much trampling the spot having been made a mere quagmire, Benjamin proposed to construct a wharf for the boys to stand upon, and pointed out a large heap of stones, intended for a new house near by, which, he said, would answer their purpose perfectly. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone home, he assembled his playfellows, and very soon the wharf was completed. Complaints, detection, and punishment quickly followed. In vain did Benjamin demonstrate to his father the utility of the measure. His father, he says, convinced him, that that which is not honest cannot be truly useful.

Benjamin shewed from his earliest childhood a remarkable fondness for reading, which induced his father to dedicate him to the service of the Church,—a resolution which had the hearty concurrence of uncle Benjamin, who offered to set him up with his old volumes of sermons. His brothers were all put to trades, except Josiah, who ran away to sea when Benjamin was an infant. At the age of eight years, Benjamin was placed at the Boston Grammar School. In less than a year, he rose to the head of his class, and was promised further promotion, but before the year came to a close, his father discovered that he had undertaken too much for one with his narrow means and large family, and he was compelled to remove him from it. Benjamin was next sent to a school kept by Mr George Brownwell, noted

for his skill in teaching, writing, and arithmetic. He remained at this school about a year, learned to write a good hand, but failed entirely in arithmetic. At ten his school life was over for ever, and he was taken by his father to assist him in his business, to cut candle-wicks, fill candle-moulds, attend the shop, and run errands. He disliked the occupation, and perhaps was not too industrious, for he tells us that his father often repeated to him the maxim of Solomon: "Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." Dr Franklin used to recall these words of his father when, half a century later, he was in the habit of standing before kings. Josiah Franklin was an indulgent father, however, and Benjamin still found time to lead the sports of his comrades, and to pore over his books.

Living on the coast, it was natural that Benjamin should imbibe a love for the water; and he speedily became an adept in swimming, and in the management of boats. He became remarkably fond of swimming, and maintained a strong love for it in after-life. He looked upon this accomplishment as one of the most useful which could be acquired, and wrote much in support of this opinion. When a boy he performed all the established feats, and invented two of his own, which he described in a letter to one of his philosophic friends, late in life. "When I was a boy," he wrote, "I made two oval pallets, each about ten inches long and six broad, with a hole for the thumb, in order to retain it fast in the palm of my hand. They much resembled a painter's pallets. In swimming I pushed the edges of these forward, and I struck the water with their flat surfaces as I drew them back. I remember I swam faster by means of these pallets, but they fatigued my wrists. I also fitted to

the soles of my feet a kind of sandals ; but I was not satisfied with them, because I observed that the stroke is partly given by the inside of the feet and ankles, and not entirely with the soles of the feet."

Another experiment was more successful : "I amused myself one day with flying a paper kite : and approaching the bank of a pond, which was near a mile broad, I tied the string to a stake, and the kite ascended to a very considerable height above the pond, while I was swimming. In a little time, being desirous of amusing myself with my kite, and enjoy at the same time the pleasure of swimming, I returned ; and, loosing the stake from the string, went again into the water, taking it with me, where, lying on my back and holding the string in my hands, I was drawn along the surface of the water in a very agreeable manner. Having then engaged another boy to carry my clothes round the pond, to a place which I pointed out to him on the other side, I began to cross the pond with my kite, which carried me quite over without the least fatigue, and with the greatest pleasure imaginable. I was only obliged occasionally to halt a little in my course, and resist its progress, when it appeared that by following too quick, I lowered the kite too much : by doing which occasionally I made it rise again. I have never since that time practised this singular mode of swimming, though I think it not impossible to cross in this manner from Dover to Calais. The packet-boat, however, is still preferable."

This mastery of the water, together with a dislike to his father's business, raised in the breast of Benjamin a great desire to go to sea, which troubled his father very much ; but about this time, 1715, his uncle Benjamin arrived from England, having made up his mind to spend his remaining

days in America in the company of his own son Samuel, and the family of his brother. He became an inmate of Josiah Franklin's house ; and the united advice and influence of father and uncle succeeded with little difficulty in dissuading Benjamin from taking the step he contemplated.

Uncle Benjamin brought with him from England his volumes of poetry and his short-hand sermon books ; his intelligent, inquiring, suggestive mind, his quaint humour, together with his guileless heart. He freely imparted whatever he knew to his young namesake ; taught him his system of short-hand, strengthened him in all his tendencies toward good, and, doubtless, placed a firm and kindly veto upon the boy's sea-going scheme. Uncle Benjamin lived four years in the house of his brother Josiah ; and then, his son Samuel having married and established a home, he went to live with him. He died in 1727 ; aged seventy-seven. In an obituary notice in a Boston newspaper, he is spoken of as "a person who was justly esteemed and beloved as a rare and exemplary Christian ;" "one who loved the people and ministers of Christ ;" whose "presence in the house of God was always solemn and affecting ;" "who courted not the observation of men ; yet there were many who could not but take notice of and admire the peculiar excellences that vividly adorned him."

The love of reading which Benjamin exhibited was not only displayed in a love of those childish and juvenile works, which please all young people, but also in an earnest and careful perusal of books of solid information and learning. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was the first book to which he felt attached, and from it he derived much good and valuable information, which he found, as he frequently

admitted in after life, of the very greatest benefit to him, during his long and useful career.


“Plutarch’s *Lives*,” a book which should be more popular among the young than it is, was another favourite of his, and he read it over and over again. “An Essay on Projects,” by Defoe, was another book to which Benjamin devoted considerable attention, and derived great benefit; and “Essays to do Good” was another, concerning which he has left a remarkable testimony.

“When I was a boy,” he wrote to Mr Samuel Mather, in his eightieth year, “I met with a book entitled ‘Essays to do Good,’ which I think was written by your father, (Cotton Mather.) It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good than on any other kind of reputation; and, if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owe the advantage of it to that book.”

Benjamin Franklin was brought up religiously: regular attendance at the Old South Church was required of him, and of all his brothers and sisters. There he once heard old Increase Mather preach, and in the course of his sermon he referred to the death “of that wicked old persecutor of God’s people, Louis XIV.” There, too, he frequently heard Cotton Mather, in the vigour of his powers. Josiah Franklin was too good-humoured and intelligent a man to be an ascetic or a bigot. The anecdote of Franklin and his father, told by the grandson of Franklin, permits us to infer that Josiah and his children lived on easy terms with one another, and that he did not embitter and cramp their


lives with the exactions and terrors of the ancient Puritanism. The boy, we are told, found the long graces used by his father before and after meals very tedious. One day, after the winter's provisions had been salted, "I think, father," said Benjamin, "if you were to say grace over the whole cask, once for all, it would be a vast saving of time."

Franklin, upon the whole, spent a very happy boyhood, and his heart yearned toward Boston as long as he lived. When he was eighty-two years old, he spoke of it as "that beloved place." He said in the same letter that he would dearly like to ramble again over the scene of so many innocent pleasures ; and as that could not be, he had a singular pleasure in the company and conversation of its inhabitants. "The Boston manner," he touchingly added, "the turn of phrase, and even tone of voice and accent in pronunciation, all please, and seem to revive and refresh me."



CHAPTER II.

APPRENTICESHIP IN BOSTON.

ENJAMIN continued to assist his father for two years. Towards the end of the second year, John Franklin, an elder brother of Benjamin, who had, like himself, been taken to assist his father when he was a boy, married and removed to Rhode Island, where he set up for himself as a soap and candle maker. This event rendered the aid of Benjamin more important to his father than before, and seemed for ever to close the door of his escape from a business which he loathed. The prospect so inflamed the discontent of the boy, that his father, fearing that the old desire to go to sea would be revived, resolved to apprentice him to a more agreeable trade. Father and son now visited together the workshops of carpenters, turners, braziers, and others; the father observing the inclinations of his boy, anxious, chiefly, to fix upon a trade that would keep him from the sea.

James Franklin, that elder brother of Benjamin who had learned the trade of a printer in London, returned to Boston, with types and a press of his own, when Benjamin was eleven years old. He established himself in business in Boston as a printer. An advertisement of his, in the *Boston Gazette* for April 25, 1760, reads thus: "The printer hereof prints linens, calicoes, silks, &c., in good figures, very lively and

durable colours, and without the offensive smell which commonly attends the linens printed here." For a year or more he appears to have done little business. He printed a few pamphlets for booksellers, and possibly a few linens, silks, and calicoes for the ladies.

When Benjamin and his father went round the workshops, the trade of printer does not appear to have occurred to either of them. There was one printer in the family already, and that was supposed to be sufficient, especially as the prospects of James in his new venture were rather uncertain.

During the second year of James Franklin's business, however, the extreme fondness which Benjamin had for reading had its effect upon the minds of his parents ; and, after a long and careful consideration, they proposed that he should be apprenticed to his brother James, in order to learn and carry out the trade of a printer. The lad for some reason or other objected at first to this, as he felt still a secret longing to go to sea ; but he ultimately consented ; and in his "Autobiography" the details of the engagement are given. "I was," he writes, "yet but twelve years old. I was to serve an apprenticeship till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made a great progress in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother."

Boston, at the time of Franklin's apprenticeship, was, as it still is, a great place for books and learning.

Twenty years before Franklin was born, there were already five booksellers in the town, and at the time here mentioned there were as many as ten booksellers in Boston when Franklin was an apprentice. Their stock was chiefly imported from England, but they published a large number of sermons, controversial tracts, pamphlets, ballads, almanacs,

and such small ware. Divinity was, of course, the main reliance of the bookseller; but we have abundant proof that whatever printed thing obtained currency among thinkers in the old country, was immediately transported to the colonies, and read by the little circle of liberal minds in each of the large towns.

Benjamin, unable to buy books, could now occasionally borrow one through his acquaintance with the booksellers' apprentices. Often he sat up in his bedroom reading the greatest part of the night, when the book borrowed in the evening had to be returned in the morning, lest the master of the shop should miss it.

"After some time a merchant, an ingenious, sensible man, Mr Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, frequented our printing-office, took notice of me, and invited me to see his library, and very kindly proposed to lend me such books as I chose to read."*

The example of Uncle Benjamin, and the poems which his new friends placed in his way, gave the apprentice a strong inclination for poetry, and induced him to compose several pieces in rhyme. His brother James conceived the idea of turning the lad's rhyming propensity to account. At that time there was a great trade in street ballads. The exploits of pirates, the execution of murderers, the gallantry of highwaymen, terrible shipwrecks, horrible crimes, and all events of great note, were chronicled in doleful doggerel ballads, which were hawked about in town and country. At the suggestion of his brother, Benjamin tried his hand at this profitable and popular kind of composition. He wrote two ballads; one, called "The Lighthouse Tragedy," was a narrative of the shipwreck of Captain Worthilake, in

* Autobiography.

which perished the captain and his two daughters ; the other was designed for sailors, and related the capture of Blackbeard, a famous pirate. Of the first-named of these ditties no trace has been discovered, and of the second only one stanza is known :—

“ Come all you jolly sailors,
You all so stout and brave ;
Come hearken and I'll tell you
What happen'd on the wave.
Oh ! 'tis of that bloody Blackbeard
I'm going now for to tell ;
And as how by gallant Maynard
He soon was sent to hell—
With a down, down, down, derry down.”

Franklin himself admits that his ballads were “wretched stuff.” As soon as the ballads were printed, his brother sent him about the town to sell them. The event of “Light-house Tragedy,” being recent and affecting, sold prodigiously, which greatly elated the young author. His father, however, came to the rescue of his good sense, pointed out the faults of the performance, told him that verse-makers were generally beggars, and succeeded in dissuading him from attempting a pursuit in which he could never have excelled.

To the criticisms of his father, Franklin also attributed his early, strong desire to attain an elegant prose style.

The comrade of the lad, during his apprenticeship, was John Collins, a youth fond of books, gifted with a fluent tongue, and much addicted to argument. Franklin, too, from reading the books of polemic divinity in his father's little collection, had become exceedingly disputatious ; a turn of mind which he afterward outgrew and disliked. An argument once arose between the friends with regard to the

utility of educating women in the sciences. Collins thought women incapable of acquiring knowledge of that nature. Franklin maintained the contrary opinion.

Now, Benjamin was never a fluent talker, and he was frequently silenced, as he thought, more by the eloquence than the arguments of his friend. They parted, on this occasion, without settling the controversy; and, as they were not to meet for some time, Franklin wrote out his argument, copied it, and sent the copy to Collins, who returned an ample reply. When three or four letters on each side had passed between them, the whole correspondence chanced to fall under the eye of Benjamin's father. He said nothing to his son on the subject in dispute, but pointed out to him what an advantage his antagonist had in the eloquence and correctness of his style. In spelling and punctuation, the old gentleman admitted that his son, owing to his trade, was superior to Collins; but in elegance and perspicuity, he showed him, by many examples, that he was far behind his antagonist. Benjamin perceived the justice of his father's remarks, and became, from that time, more attentive to his style, and, indeed, took unusual pains to improve it.

An odd volume of the "Spectator," the only one that he had ever seen, fell opportunely in his way. He read it over again and again with delight and admiration, and soon attempted to imitate its easily-imitated style. Sometimes he made memoranda of the purport of each sentence of one of the papers, laid them past for a few days, then rewrote the paper, and corrected his own composition by comparing it with the original. Occasionally he turned one of the stories into verse, and when he had partly forgotten the prose, turned it back again. He found that rhyming, even if one

could never be a poet, had its uses ; the struggle for the rhyming word, the search for words of the requisite length and accent, tended, he thought, to give the student a mastery of language. Sometimes he would make a sketch of the meaning of each sentence of an essay on separate pieces of paper, tumble them into confusion, lay them aside till he had quite forgotten the piece, and then try and reconstruct it. This he did as a lesson in the art of arranging the matter of an essay. On comparing his work with the original, he found many faults, which he corrected ; but, occasionally, he had the pleasure of fancying that in some particulars of minor consequence he had improved either the method or the style. When this occurred, he was encouraged to think that he might in time become a tolerable English writer, a distinction of which, he tells us, he was extremely ambitious.

About the same time he went through some of the common school-books of the day. Cocker's Arithmetic, the Cocker of the proverb and the farce, which puzzled four generations of school-boys, he had twice tried and failed to master. But now, having on some occasion been made ashamed of his ignorance of figures, he took up the book in earnest, and went through it with ease. In the same way he mastered a treatise on English Grammar and another on Navigation. He also read Locke on "Human Understanding," "The Art of Thinking," and Xenophon's "Memorabilia." The last-mentioned work gave the young disputant peculiar pleasure. The Socratic method of arguing he adopted at once, discarding his former practice of flat contradiction and positive assertion, assuming the tone of the modest inquirer after truth, and involving his antagonist in a maze by a series of questions. On this subject

Franklin has some useful remarks in his "Autobiography," which we cannot do better than insert here:—


"I took delight in it, practised it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people even of superior knowledge into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved.

"I continued this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence, never using, when I advance anything that may possibly be disputed, the words *certainly, undoubtedly*, or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather say, *I conceive*, or *apprehend*, a thing to be so and so; *It appears to me*, or, *I should not think it, so or so, for such and such reasons*; or, *I imagine it to be so*; or, *It is so, if I am not mistaken*. This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engaged in promoting. And as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform*, or to *be informed*, to *please*, or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning and sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat most of those purposes for which speech was given to us. In fact, if you wish to instruct others, a positive dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may occasion opposition, and prevent a candid attention. If you desire instruction and improvement from others, you should not at the same time express yourself fixed in your present opinions. Modest and sensible men, who do not love disputation, will leave

you undisturbed in the possession of your errors. In adopting such a manner, you can seldom expect to please your hearers, or obtain the concurrence you desire. Pope judiciously observes,


‘Men must be taught, as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot.’”

But how did our apprentice find time for such various studies? The evenings were probably his own, and if they were not, he made evenings out of the early hours of the night. He gained the greater part of the dinner hour by a curious expedient. A little book on the vegetarian system of diet fell in his way, and made an easy convert of him. His refusal to eat flesh occasioned, sometimes, an inconvenience at the house where he boarded, and he was often reproved for his singularity. Having made himself acquainted with the manner of preparing the viands recommended in his vegetarian treatise, he told his brother that, if he would give him half the money paid for his board, he would board himself. His brother consented. Upon trying the experiment, Benjamin found that he could save half of the half; a precious addition to his means of buying books. But the great advantage was, that he could eat his noontide biscuit, his potatoes, rice, or hasty-pudding, at the printing-office, and thus get nearly the whole hour for reading. His dinner, he says, consisted often of a slice of bread or a biscuit, a handful of raisins, and a glass of water. Rising early in the morning, he had an hour for study before work began.



CHAPTER III.

THE "NEW ENGLAND COURANT"—THE RUNAWAY.

RANKLIN, while continuing to indulge the fervent love of books and literature which he had acquired at this time, also, unconsciously almost, imbibed infidel opinions, which for a few years were to him a source of considerable mental disquiet and great anxiety; however, as he advanced to years of discretion, he gradually overcame those obnoxious views, and ultimately looked back upon this unsettled period of his life, with feelings of gratitude that he had been enabled to pass through it without permanent injury to his religious convictions.

James Franklin's business at this time continued to increase, and events occurred which materially influenced the future career of both Benjamin and himself. A newspaper had been published in Boston for some time by the postmaster, but in consequence of some dissatisfaction having been felt with him, he was removed from his official position; and a number of influential persons agreed among themselves to support his successor in starting an opposition paper in order to maintain their own interests and political views. This was during the second year of Benjamin's apprenticeship, and his brother had strong hopes of being employed to print the projected newspaper.

The *Boston Gazette*, as the new publication was called, however, owing to some misunderstanding, was not printed by Franklin, although it is probable that he had incurred considerable expense in preparing for it. He appears to have considered this as a breach of faith on the part of the projectors of the *Gazette*, and took steps to resent the transfer of the work to another printer. To this feeling of resentment is to be attributed his determination to originate a third newspaper—an unwise proceeding, as Boston had never been able sufficiently to support even one. His friends remonstrated with him strongly against the undertaking, but without effect ; and on Monday, August 17, 1721, appeared the first number of the *New England Courant*, owned, printed, and edited by James Franklin.

The *Courant* was from the first a peculiar paper, and totally different from the other colonial publications. It was more spirited, witty, and daring. The Boston public, accustomed to the monotonous dulness of the oldest paper (the *News Letter*,) and the equally tedious respectability of the *Gazette*, received,—some with delight, some with fear, all with amazement, the new weekly budget of fun and freedom. A number of liberal-minded men gathered round James Franklin to support him, and they kept him well supplied with local intelligence, squibs, essays, and every variety of sense and nonsense known at the time ; and ere long the *Courant*, on account of its extreme daring and freedom in criticising passing events, was involved in controversies and disputes innumerable, in some of which the public feeling was with the bold conductor, and in others—particularly in one opposing the introduction of inoculation as a remedy for small-pox—rousing the ire of the quiet living Bostonians.

Benjamin, the apprentice, meanwhile, set the types, worked at the press, and carried about the paper, never presuming to take part in any controversy, keenly as some of them interested him. There was not a cordial feeling between Benjamin and his brother James. The lad was treated in all respects as an apprentice, nothing whatever being conceded to the relationship between himself and his master. Often high words passed between the brothers; often the master inflicted blows upon the apprentice; often their father was called upon to settle their differences, and, generally, he decided that Benjamin was in the right. It was owing, doubtless, to this ill feeling, that James Franklin knew little of the lad's studies and aspirations; least of all, suspected that his apprentice, before he was sixteen, had so completely caught the Addisonian manner as to be able to produce passages, if not whole essays, scarcely inferior to Addison, either in spirit or in style.

Moved, at length, to try his hand at an article for the *Courant*, the apprentice executed his purpose in secret, disguised his hand, and thrust the piece under the door of the printing-house at night.

The next morning, when the contributors assembled for their daily chat and consultation, the apprentice as he stood at the case heard his piece read and commented on. He tells us that he had the exquisite pleasure of finding that it was approved of; and that, in their guesses at the author, they mentioned none but men noted for learning and talents; and they finally agreed to insert it in the next number, which was done, to the intense gratification of the young, but unknown, writer. Life knows no moment of deeper joy than the one which reveals to the young genius that he actually has something of the power to move and charm which he

has so long admired and coveted. When Charles Dickens saw his piece "in all the glory of print," he had to turn into Westminster Hall, he says, to hide his tears of joy and pride. Franklin's experience must have been similar for him to have spoken of it, fifty-five years after, as an exquisite pleasure.

For nearly twelve months the saucy *Courant* continued to amuse the sinners and exasperate the saints of Boston, without molestation. During that time the governing power of Boston permitted it to make merry with their measures and their manners, their dogmas and their dignity.

But their patience was exhausted at length, and they proceeded against the offensive journal, on a pretext of the most frivolous character. The *Courant* for June 11, 1722, contained a fictitious letter from Newport, which stated that a pirate vessel had been seen off Block Island, and that the authorities of the colony were fitting out two vessels to go in pursuit of her. The article concluded with these words: 'We are advised from Boston, that the government of the Massachusetts are fitting out a ship (the Flying Horse) to go after the pirates, to be commanded by Captain Peter Papillon, and 'tis thought he will sail some time this month, wind and weather permitting.' This reflection upon the tardiness of the government was seized upon as the pretext for most arbitrary proceedings.

The Council summoned James Franklin before them. After being questioned, he owned that he was the publisher of the paper, but refused to reveal the name of the author of the offensive article. He appears to have borne himself haughtily in the presence of the Council. Benjamin was examined, and he, too, refused to name the author, a contumacy which was excused in him on the ground that an

apprentice was bound not to betray his master's secrets. The Council decided that the paragraph was "a high affront to the government," and ordered the sheriff to commit James Franklin to the Boston jail.

A week's confinement in the cell of a prison had such an effect upon the spirits of the unlucky printer, that he sent to the Council a petition, couched in the humblest terms. He said that "he was truly sensible and heartily sorry for the offence he had given to this court in the late *Courant*, relating to the fitting out of a ship by the government, and truly acknowledges his inadvertency and folly therein in affronting the government, as also his indiscretion and indecency when before the court; for all which he intreats the court's forgiveness, and praying a discharge from the Stone Prison, where he is confined by order of the court, and that he may have the liberty of the yard, he being much indisposed, and suffering in his health by the said confinement."

The petition was granted. But he had been confined a whole month before he was released.

While his brother was in prison, Benjamin managed the printing-office and conducted the *Courant*. So far was he and the knot of writers from being intimidated by the prosecution, that, from this time forward, the *Courant* redoubled both the number and the severity of its attacks upon the administration. Even while James Franklin lay in prison, the proceedings of the Council were assailed by argument, eloquence, and satire, in prose and verse, in squib and essay. One number, issued just after James Franklin's release, was nearly filled with passages from Magna Charta, and comments upon the same, showing the unconstitutionality of the treatment to which he had been subjected. It is evident

that a considerable number of the people of Boston most heartily sympathised with the *Courant* in its gallant contest for the liberty of the press, and that the issue of the number was, to these and to others, the most interesting event of the week.

The authorities bore these assaults for six months after the expiration of the printer's term of incarceration. But the number of the *Courant* for January 14, 1723, was so variously and stingingly offensive to them, that they could endure it no longer. Besides many little hits at the governor and other dignitaries, it contained a long and telling article on the vices and follies of church members. Indeed, the whole of this number of the *Courant*, except a very few short paragraphs, was offensive, and meant to be offensive, to the clergy, or the magistrates, or both.

The very day on which this defiantly exasperating number appeared, the Council ordered that, whereas the *Courant* of that date contained "many passages in which the Holy Scriptures were perverted, and the civil government, ministers, and people of this province highly reflected on, a committee of three persons be appointed to consider and report what is proper for this court to do thereon."

In two days, the committee had considered the matter and were ready to report. They "were humbly of opinion that the tendency of the said paper is to mock religion, and bring it into contempt, that the Holy Scriptures are therein profanely abused, that the revered and faithful ministers of the Gospel are injuriously reflected on, His Majesty's Government affronted, and the peace and good order of His Majesty's subjects of this province disturbed, by the said *Courant*; and for precaution of the like offence for the future, the committee humbly propose, That James Franklin,

the printer and publisher thereof, be strictly forbidden by this Court to print or publish the *New England Courant*, or any other pamphlet or paper of the like nature, except it be first supervised by the Secretary of this Province."

This report was approved, and an order was issued in accordance therewith.

What effect this proceeding had upon the minds of the people of Boston we can only infer, as there is no record on the subject. The *Philadelphia Mercury* commented upon it with humour and severity, descanting on the injustice of punishing Mr Franklin without giving him a hearing. "An indifferent person," said the *Mercury*, "would judge, from this conduct, that the Assembly of Massachusetts were oppressors and bigots, 'who made religion only an engine of destruction to the people.'" The *Mercury* pitied the people who were compelled to submit to the tyranny of priestcraft and hypocrisy, and concluded its comments with a witty P.S.: "By private letters from Boston, we are informed that the bakers were under great apprehensions of being forbid baking any more bread, unless they will submit it to the Secretary as supervisor-general and weigher of the dough, before it is baked into bread and offered to sale."

All this must have been consoling when it reached Boston, about two months after the event. The persecuted printer, however, was obliged to act immediately, or lose his newspaper. The contributors assembled at the office as soon as the decision of the Council was known, to devise a scheme for safely evading the arbitrary mandate. It was resolved, after other plans had been considered and rejected, that the paper should be issued thenceforth in the name of Benjamin Franklin. To obviate the charge of continuing to print the *Courant* by his apprentice, James Franklin cancelled the

youth's indentures, and returned them to him, to be shown if there should be occasion ; at the same time, to secure the lad's valuable services for the four remaining years of his apprenticeship, he caused him to sign new indentures, which were to be kept secret. The next number of the *Courant* announced that "the late publisher of this paper, finding so many inconveniences would arise by his carrying the manuscripts and public news to be supervised by the Secretary as to render his carrying it on unprofitable, has entirely dropt the undertaking."

Then followed a long and humorous prospectus, written as though the *New England Courant* were then presenting itself to the public for the first time.

The paper continued to be humorous and satirical, but did not refrain entirely from bantering the local government and clergy ; altogether, the *Courant* appears to have prospered under its young publisher. A month after James Franklin fell under the ban of the Council we read in the *Courant*: "This Paper having met with so general an Acceptance in Town and Country, as to require a far greater number of them to be printed than there is of the other publick Papers ; and it being besides more generally read by a Vast Number of Borrowers, who do not take it in, the Publisher thinks proper to give this public Notice for the Incouragement of those who would have Advertisements inserted in the publick Prints, which they may have printed in this Paper at a moderate price."

James and Benjamin Franklin, brothers though they were, had not virtue enough between them to live together in tolerable peace. The elder was jealous of the younger's reputation. He was harsh and unjust to him ; and Benjamin owns, in his "Autobiography," that "perhaps he was too saucy

and provoking." James did not know that he had the most valuable apprentice in the world, and the apprentice knew it too well.

The cancelling of his indentures had set the apprentice free, since his brother would not dare to appeal to the secret document which still bound him. But neither this circumstance, nor the lad's increased age and usefulness, had the effect of rendering his brother less exacting or better tempered. A quarrel, more violent than any previous one, occurred between the brothers a few months after the second attempt to silence the *Courant*. From words James Franklin proceeded to blows, though his brother was then seventeen years of age. The youth, burning with indignation, asserted his right to be free, and declared his intention to leave his brother's service. It is an evidence how changed our feelings have become with regard to the sanctity of engagements, that this resolve of the apprentice to leave his brother, which few persons of the present day would be inclined to censure, Franklin regarded as "one of the first errata" of his life. His father also urged him to remain and fulfil his contract with his brother.

Benjamin adhered to his resolve. His brother went round to all the printers in Boston, giving them his own version of the difference between himself and his apprentice. When Benjamin applied to them for employment, they all made common cause with his master, and refused him. The youth would not yield. His fancy wandered to other scenes. Boston was not all the world.

Benjamin had resolved to run away. There were then but three towns in the colonies which could boast a printing-office—Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. To New York, because it was nearer than Philadelphia, he determined to

go. His old friend, John Collins, undertook to manage his flight, and engaged a passage for him in a New York sloop. To account for his coming on board secretly and keeping himself concealed, Collins told the captain that his friend had had an intrigue with a girl of bad character, whose parents were determined to make him marry her. To raise the passage-money the runaway was obliged to sell some of his precious books.

The young runaway had a safe, swift, and pleasant passage to New York, of which one incident only is known to us. When the sloop was becalmed one day off Block Island, the sailors amused themselves by fishing for cod, as becalmed sailors and yachtsmen do to this day off that coast. Benjamin, who still adhered to his vegetarian theory, regarded the taking of life for the sake of procuring food as murder. Fishing, in particular, was looked upon by him as murder unprovoked; for no one could contend that these cod, which the sailors kept hauling up over the sloop's bulwarks and throwing them upon the deck, had wrought any harm to their captors. This argument, so long as the mere catching continued, seemed unanswerable; but when, by and by, the cod began to send forth a most alluring odour from the frying-pan, the tempted vegetarian, who had formerly been extremely fond of fish, found it necessary to go over his reasoning again, to see if there was not a flaw in it. He was so unhappy as not to be able to find one, and for some minutes there was a struggle between principle and inclination. It occurred to him at length that when the fish were opened he had seen smaller fish in their stomachs. "If you eat one another," said he to himself, "I don't see why we may not eat you." So he dined upon cod very heartily, and continued afterwards to eat what other people

ate. After telling this story he makes an observation which is often attributed to Talleyrand and others, but which was a familiar joke with Franklin when Talleyrand was a boy. "So convenient a thing it is," says Franklin, "to be a *reasonable* creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do."

After a passage of three days from Boston, Benjamin Franklin, then nearly eighteen years old, stood in the streets of New York. He had not an acquaintance in the town; he had no letter of recommendation; he had very little money.

New York was then a town of seven or eight thousand inhabitants, where most objects that met the eye and most sounds that caught the ear were Dutch.

As the people were chiefly Dutch, there was little encouragement in New York for English printers. Boston had established a newspaper in 1704; Philadelphia had one in 1719; but New York not until 1725. When young Franklin arrived here in 1723 there was not a book store in the town, and only one printing-office, that of old William Bradford, formerly of Philadelphia, progenitor of a line of American printers. To him the runaway at once applied for employment. Bradford could give him none, as he had little to do, and had already as many hands as he could employ. He told him, however, that his son, in Philadelphia, had just lost by death his principal journeyman, Aquila Rose. "If you go there," added Bradford, "he may employ you." As the young man had by this time outlived his passion for the sea, he had but the alternative to go home or to go on in pursuit of work. He appears to have decided upon the bolder course without a moment's hesitation.

Leaving his chest and other effects to go round by sea,

he took passage for Amboy, in a crazy old boat with rotten sails, managed by one boatman. Besides himself there was another passenger, a drunken Dutchman. Soon after passing the island which is now called Governor's Island, then uninhabited, the boat was struck by a squall, which tore the sails to pieces, drove the boat over toward Long Island, and cast the Dutchman overboard. As he was sinking, young Franklin caught him by his hair and drew him up, so that he was got on board again. Partly sobered by his ducking, he took a book out of his pocket, and asked his preserver to dry it for him, after which he lay down and fell asleep. The book proved to be a fine copy, in Dutch, with engravings on copper, of the first favourite of the runaway's childhood, "Pilgrim's Progress." He had never before seen it in so elegant a dress. The boat continued to drive before the wind until it was near the Long Island shore, on which the surf was breaking so violently as to threaten the boat with destruction. They cast their anchor and swung round toward the land. They saw some people come down to the shore; but so loud was the roar of the surf that they could neither make themselves heard nor hear the shouts of the men on the beach. Hungry as they were, for they had no provisions on board but a bottle of bad rum, there was no resource but to wait for the lulling of the wind. All night long Franklin, the boatman, and the wet Dutchman, lay crowded together under the hatches, the spray breaking over the bows, and leaking upon them through the deck, till they were all drenched. They passed a sleepless and miserable night. In the morning, the wind having abated, they managed to get the old boat before the wind, and, late in the afternoon, reached Amboy. For thirty hours they had tasted neither food nor water; and in the evening the

youth found himself very feverish from the long abstinence and exposure. When he had got into bed he remembered having read that drinking plentifully of cold water was good for a fever. He followed the prescription, perspired profusely, and rose the next morning quite free from fever.

A walk of fifty miles, from Amboy across the province of New Jersey to Burlington, on the Delaware River, was next to be undertaken by our traveller. It rained hard the morning after his arrival at Amboy, but he could not afford to wait. Soaked with rain, he trudged along till noon, till he came to a poor inn by the road-side, where, as he felt very tired, he resolved to stay till the next morning. And now, for the first time, his heart began to fail him. He began to wish he had not left home; and the more, as he saw he was suspected of being a runaway, and was in some danger of being taken up. He was indeed, by this time, a sorry figure. He had started from Boston in his working clothes, which, by exposure to rain and the wear and tear of travel, had become shabby and dilapidated in the extreme. Well formed and well grown as he was, with a handsome open face and a fresh ruddy complexion, he looked as little like the great man he was destined to become as can well be imagined.

The next day he took to the road again, and made such good progress as to sleep that night within ten miles of Burlington, which he reached the next morning, the day being Saturday. Burlington is seventeen miles above Philadelphia. As he passed through the town to get to the river side he bought some gingerbread of an old woman, who, as it proved, saw something in this young man besides his worn and travel-stained clothes. On reaching the river he was sadly disappointed to find that the regular Saturday

boat had gone, and that no other was expected to leave before the next Tuesday. He went back to the old woman, of whom he had bought the gingerbread, and asked her advice. The good soul invited him to lodge in her house until Tuesday. Tired with his long journey, he gladly accepted her invitation.

In the evening, as he was walking on the bank of the river, a chance boat came along, having on board several passengers, bound for Philadelphia. They agreed to take him in, and he was soon on board, moving slowly down toward his destination. As there was no wind they were obliged to row. About midnight, the city not yet being in sight, some of the passengers protested they must have passed it, and would row no more ; and as the others knew not where they were, it was agreed to land and wait for daylight. Finding a little creek, they put into it, landed, made a fire of the rails of an old fence, and there remained till the dawn of day. One of the company then recognising the place as Cooper's Creek, which he knew to be a short distance above the city, they re-embarked, and had no sooner got into the Delaware again than Philadelphia came into view. Between eight and nine o'clock on Sunday morning the boat was made fast at Market Street Wharf, and Franklin went on shore. He had one silver dollar and a shilling in coppers. The boatmen refused to take anything for his passage, as he had helped them to row the boat ; but he insisted on their taking all his copper coin. "Man," he remarks, after relating this incident, "is sometimes more generous when he has little money than when he has plenty, perhaps to prevent his being thought to have but little."

He stepped upon the wharf at Philadelphia worn out with hunger, fatigue, exposure, and want of sleep. As he walked

up into the town, gazing about him, he met a boy with bread. Often in Boston he had made a meal of dry bread ; and so, after learning from the boy where he had bought it, he went to the shop and asked for biscuits, meaning a kind of bread made by the Boston bakers. It was not known in Philadelphia. He then asked for a threepenny loaf, but the baker had none. He asked for threepenny worth of bread of any kind, and was surprised to receive three rolls of a magnitude that seemed to him out of all proportion to the price. Having no room in his pockets, he walked off with a roll under each arm, and eating a third. As he went up Market Street he passed by the house of Mr Read, whose blooming daughter Deborah, a lass of eighteen, stood at the door, and wondered at his strange and ridiculous appearance. Unconscious of the figure he was making in the eyes of his future wife, he walked through Philadelphia, which was then only a spread-out, grassy, gardened village, of seven thousand inhabitants. He continued to traverse various streets till at length he had finished his roll, and completed his breakfast with a draught of water from the river. The other two rolls he gave to a poor woman and her child, who had been passengers in the boat and were waiting at the wharf to continue their voyage down the river.

Refreshed with his breakfast, he went into Market Street, which was then alive with neatly-dressed people all going in one direction. Joining the throng, he was led to what was then called the "Great Meeting-house" of the Quakers. Into it the young stranger followed the crowd, and sat down. He looked around upon the congregation for a while, expecting the exercises to begin. The silence remaining unbroken, drowsiness fell upon the tired traveller, and he was soon fast asleep. He slept soundly till the


meeting broke up, and would still have slept if some one had not been obliging enough to wake him.

As he walked down toward the river, looking into the faces of the passers-by, he accosted a young Quaker, whose countenance pleased him, and asked him where a stranger could find a lodging. "Here," said the Quaker, pointing to the Three Mariners, "is a house where they receive strangers, but it is not a respectable one ; if thee will walk with me, I'll show thee a better." He conducted him along the wharves to a tavern, called The Crooked Billet. While Benjamin was eating his dinner here, he again observed, from the questions asked him, that he was suspected of being a runaway. After dinner he lay down and slept till he was called to supper, and soon after supper went to bed, and slept soundly until the morning. He had then been eleven days from home.

X

CHAPTER IV.

PHILADELPHIA TO LONDON.

ARLY in the morning, having dressed himself as neatly as he could in his old and travel-worn clothes, he went to the house of the printer to whom he had been recommended, Andrew Bradford. Bradford received Franklin with civility, invited him in to breakfast, but disappointed the young printer by telling him that he was already supplied with a hand ; he told him, however, that a new printer, named Samuel Keimer, had recently set up in the town. If Keimer should have no work, Bradford kindly offered the youth a home and a little employment now and then, till he could do better.

Benjamin went to Keimer's office without loss of time. In a small office, furnished with an old damaged press and an incomplete worn-out fount of types, he found the new printer at work. Keimer asked a few questions of the stranger, and put a composing-stick into his hands to see how he worked. The examination being satisfactory, he said he had no work for him then, but would employ him soon.

For several days he continued to live at Bradford's, doing occasionally a little work in his office. He was sent for, at length, by Keimer, whom he found had, since his first visit,

both increased his stock of materials and obtained a pamphlet to print. Franklin began upon the pamphlet, and thenceforth worked regularly in Keimer's office. His employer objecting to his boarding at the house of a rival printer, yet having no establishment of his own, procured for him a lodging at the house of Mr Read, whose daughter had seen the uneouth apparition pass, on that memorable Sunday morning, devouring a roll.

Weeks passed. He earned good wages. He had a pleasant home. He found friends who were fond of reading, with whom he spent pleasant evenings. Boston he tried not to think of, and he wrote to no one but John Collins, who kept his secret faithfully. Indeed, the arbitrary conduct of his brother had made upon his mind an indelible impression, which for a time rendered the thought of Boston displeasing to him.

At length he heard from home. One of his sisters had married Robert Holmes, captain of a sloop that traded between Boston and Delaware. Captain Holmes being at Newcastle, a town on the Delaware river, forty miles below Philadelphia, heard of the runaway and wrote to him. He told him of the grief of his parents and friends at his abrupt departure, and assured him that if he would return he should have no cause to complain in future. Benjamin wrote him a civil and elaborate reply, in which he narrated the circumstances that led to his leaving Boston. The narrative convinced his brother-in-law that he was not so much in the wrong as he had supposed. The runaway declared his intention to remain in Philadelphia. X

This letter had a decisive effect upon the fortunes of the writer of it. When Captain Holmes received it he chanced to be in company with Sir William Keith, the Governor of

Pennsylvania. Struck with the composition of the letter, he showed it to the Governor, who read it with admiration, and admired it the more when told the age of the writer. The Philadelphia printers, he said, were wretched ones,—which was true, for Bradford was both ignorant and unskilful, and Keimer was a compound of fool and rogue. But this young man, he added, was evidently one of promising parts, and ought to be encouraged ; and if he would set up at Philadelphia he should have all the public printing. Captain Holmes, for some reason, did not reply to Benjamin's long epistle ; so that the young man's astonishment at what followed was extreme ; nor was he able to account for it, until he met Captain Holmes some months after.

Franklin and his master were working together one day, when they saw two finely-dressed gentlemen crossing the street, with the evident intention of entering the printing-house. One of these Keimer recognised as Sir William Keith, and the other proved to be a Colonel French, of Delaware. Keimer supposed, of course, that the visit was to him, and ran down-stairs to receive them. The Governor, however, inquired for Franklin, and learning that he was in the printing-office, went up to see him. He greeted the young printer with a degree of politeness and condescension to which he had not been accustomed ; paid him many compliments ; expressed a desire to become acquainted with him ; blamed him for not having called upon him on his arrival at Philadelphia, and ended by inviting him to a tavern, where Colonel French and himself were then going. Keimer stared with astonishment. Franklin himself was not less amazed. However, he went out with them to the tavern, and the three sat down to discuss at once their bottle and the future career of the young stranger.

The Governor repeated what he had already said to Captain Holmes. He proposed that Franklin should immediately, by the aid of his father, establish himself in business as a printer in Philadelphia, and enlarged upon the probabilities of his success. Both the Governor and Colonel French engaged to use all their influence to procure for him the public printing of Pennsylvania and Delaware, which was then considerable. The young man replied that he doubted whether his father would advance him the requisite sum. Sir William said that he would himself write a letter to his father, setting forth the advantages of the scheme, and he felt sure he could induce him to comply. Before they parted it had been concluded that Franklin should return to Boston by the first vessel, taking with him the Governor's letter, and endeavour to bring over his father to their plans. In the meantime the scheme was to be kept secret, and he was to go on working for Keimer as before. The party broke up. The Governor sent now and then for his *protégé* to dine at his house, and on those occasions conversed with him in the most agreeable, friendly, and familiar manner, which the young printer considered a great honour.

Perhaps the reader should be reminded that for a century or more after the invention of printing, printers ranked above mechanics in the social scale. Printing was originally regarded as a kind of sacred art, partly because it was almost exclusively employed in the multiplication of sacred books. Several of the early printers, too, were scholars. It was long before the art was so far perfected as to *be* mechanical, and still longer before it was thought so. As late as Franklin's day, printers were expected to be men of considerable education, and usually were such.

Toward the end of April 1724, a small vessel offering for Boston, Franklin took passage in her, giving out that he was going home for a time to see his friends. The Governor gave him a long letter to his father, in which the young man was highly extolled, and which declared that he had but to set up a printing-office in Philadelphia to make his fortune. After a tempestuous voyage of two weeks he arrived safely in Boston, having been absent from home seven months. Captain Holmes had not yet arrived, nor had tidings of the runaway been received at Boston from any other source. His return was, therefore, a surprise to all his relations, and to all but his brother James a joyful one.

Benjamin's old friend, Collins, who was then a clerk in the Post-office, was so pleased with Franklin's description of Pennsylvania, that he determined to remove thither. He set out by land forthwith, leaving his books to be brought round by sea to New York, where he agreed to wait for Franklin.

Meanwhile, wary and sagacious Josiah Franklin considered the proposition contained in the letter of Sir William Keith. For some time he said little of it to his son. Captain Holmes arriving afterwards from Delaware, the old man showed him the letter, asked him if he knew what kind of man Sir William Keith was, adding that, for his own part, he thought the Governor must be a man of little discretion, to think of setting up in business for himself a lad of eighteen. Captain Holmes espoused the cause of his brother-in-law, and said all he could in favour of the project. The result, however, of the old man's cogitations was a flat refusal to advance the necessary sum. Benjamin was too young, he said. He was glad his son had been so highly approved by the Governor of the colony in which he had lived, and that

he had been so industrious and so prudent as to provide for himself so handsomely in so short a time. He gave his consent to the youth's returning to Philadelphia, and promised that, if by the time he was twenty-one he had saved nearly enough to set himself up in business, he would help him out with the rest. To this promise he added some good advice. He urged him to behave respectfully to the people of Philadelphia, to endeavour to stand well with them, and to repress his fondness for lampooning and satire. To Sir William Keith the prudent father wrote a polite letter, thanking him for the interest he had taken in his son, and giving his reasons for declining, at present, to assist the youth in the manner proposed.

One pleasing incident of this visit home was related by Franklin, sixty years after, in a letter to the son of Cotton Mather. "The last time I saw your father," he wrote, "was in the beginning of 1724, when I visited him, after my first trip to Pennsylvania. He received me in his library; and on my taking leave, showed me a shorter way out of the house, through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam overhead. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly toward him, when he said, hastily, '*Stoop, stoop!*' I did not understand him till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me, '*You are young, and have the world before you; STOOP as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.*' This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me; and I often think of it when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people, by their carrying their heads too high."

With the blessing and approbation of his parents, and

some small gifts, as tokens of their affection, he left his native place a second time. The sloop in which he sailed touched at Newport, where then lived his brother John, who had been his shopmate, while he had helped his father at candle-making, six or seven years before. His brother, who had always loved him, received him very affectionately; yet this stay at Newport had unpleasant consequences. A Mr Vernon, a friend of his brother John, who had seven or eight pounds sterling due to him in Pennsylvania, gave the young man an order to receive the money, requesting him to keep it till he should receive directions from Newport what to do with it. Benjamin undertook the trust, not doubting his ability to discharge it.

Leaving Newport he proceeded to New York, where he overtook his friend Collins, who had waited for him, in order to accompany him to Philadelphia. To Benjamin's great regret he now learned that his friend had lost a great many of his former steady habits during the time he had been from home. He had contracted habits of intemperance and idleness; and Franklin was obliged to pay his expenses in New York and during the rest of their journey, which proved a sore calamity to him, and the cause of bitter regret for some years.

Franklin's stay in New York on this occasion was marked by an agreeable and unexpected incident.

An interest in books, we may premise, was in itself a bond of union between the early colonists. Books were extremely expensive; public libraries were unknown; private collections were few and small; and the lovers of literature, other than divinity, were not numerous. To be a reader of books or to possess a collection of fifty volumes was a distinction in the colonies when Franklin was a young man. Scholar-

ship was deeply honoured in the colonies from the earliest period of their existence.

The Governor of New York, in 1724, was that witty, genial William Burnet, (son of the famous bishop of that name,) who was wont to "act first and think afterwards," as he himself confessed, and therefore wasted his life and fine abilities in an endless jangle with the colonial magnates. He had one of the very few good libraries in the new world, and was extremely fond of books and of men who loved them. Learning from the captain of the sloop that one of his passengers from Boston had a great many books on board, Governor Burnet asked the captain to bring young Franklin to him. "I waited on him," Franklin too briefly records, "and should have taken Collins with me had he been sober. The governor received me with great civility, showed me his library, which was a considerable one, and we had a good deal of conversation relative to books and authors. This was the second governor who had done me the honour to take notice of me; and, for a poor boy like me, it was very pleasing."

Resuming their journey, the two young men proceeded together to Philadelphia. On the way, Franklin received the money due to Mr Vernon of Newport; and such had been the extravagance of Collins, that he was obliged to spend part of the sum for the travelling expenses of himself and his drunken companion.

Fifty-six years after, he related to Dr Priestley an anecdote of his descending the Delaware at this time. He told the story to illustrate the truth, that all situations in life have their inconveniences, and that while men feel acutely the evils of their present lot, they neither feel nor know the evils of that for which they long. "In my youth," said the aged

philosopher, "I was passenger in a little sloop descending the river Delaware. There being no wind, we were obliged, when the ebb was spent, to cast anchor and wait for the next. The heat of the sun on the vessel was excessive, the company strangers to me, and not very agreeable. Near the river side I saw what I took to be a pleasant green meadow, in the middle of which was a large shady tree, where, it struck my fancy, I could sit and read, (having a book in my pocket,) and pass the time agreeably till the tide turned; I therefore prevailed with the captain to put me ashore. Being landed, I found the greatest part of my meadow was really a marsh, in crossing which, to come at my tree, I was up to my knees in mire; and I had not placed myself under its shade five minutes before the mosquitoes in swarms found me out, attacked my legs, hands, and face, and made my reading and my rest impossible; so that I returned to the beach, and called for the boat to come and take me on board again, where I was obliged to bear the heat I had strove to quit, and also the laugh of the company. Similar cases in the affairs of life have since frequently fallen under my observation."

Sir William Keith, on reading the letter of Franklin's father, was not in the least disposed to give up the scheme of establishing his *protégé*. "Your father," said he, "is too prudent. There is a great difference in persons. Discretion does not always accompany years, nor is youth always without it. But since he will not set you up, I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England, and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolved to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed." Enchanted with this offer, and believing Sir William Keith to be one of

the best men in the world, the young man hastened to draw up a list of the articles required, amounting in value to about a hundred pounds. On receiving the inventory, the governor asked whether it would not be an advantage for the young printer to go to England and select the materials himself. "Besides," said the Governor, "when there, you may make acquaintances and establish correspondence with booksellers and stationers." The elated youth agreed that this *might* be advantageous. "Then," said the governor, "get yourself ready to go with Annis," the captain of the single ship that then plied regularly between London and Philadelphia, sailing from each port once a year.

Some months elapsed before the ship sailed, during which Franklin worked for the eccentric Keimer, and kept secret all that had passed between himself and the governor of Pennsylvania. Hence, no one told him what a vain, false, gasconading popularity-hunter Sir William Keith was. Relying implicitly upon his promises, Franklin spent many months of happy anticipation, and one of the most joyous half-years of his life was that which passed while he was waiting for the departure of the annual ship. Youth, hope, prosperity, congenial friends, and reciprocated love, combined to render his working days serene, and his holidays memorably happy.

Nevertheless, such is human life, even this happy time had its anguish and its bitterness. John Collins, for some weeks after he had reached Philadelphia, was the plague and shame of Franklin's life. He had become the helpless and unresisting slave of his appetite for drink. Besides living in idleness at Franklin's lodgings and at his expense, he kept borrowing money from him, promising to repay it as soon as he should get employment. Franklin indignantly re-

monstrated with him, and angry words frequently occurred between them.

His friendship for John Collins was worn out at last. Franklin, Collins, and a party of Philadelphia lads were in a boat on the Delaware, one day, when Collins refused to take his turn at the oar, saying that he meant to be rowed home. "We will not row you," said Franklin. "You must," replied Collins, "or stay all night on the water." The others said, "Let us row, what does it signify?" But Franklin, embittered against him by his previous misconduct, persisted in refusing. Collins swore he would make him row or throw him overboard, and went toward him, stepping on the seats of the boat, to execute his threat. On getting near enough, the maddened youth struck at his old friend. But Franklin was too quick for him. "I clapped my head under his thighs," he tells us, "and rising, pitched him head foremost into the river." Knowing Collins to be a good swimmer, he gave himself no concern for his safety. On the contrary, when Collins had turned, and was about to catch hold of the boat, they pulled it beyond his reach, asking him whether he would do his share of rowing, a manoeuvre that was several times repeated. Choking with rage, he would not promise to row, and persisted so long that he began to tire; when his companions relented, drew him in, and brought him home dripping wet. After this event the two Bostonians scarcely exchanged a civil word. Collins at length accepted the offer of a tutorship at Barbadoes, and left Philadelphia for that island, promising Franklin to remit what he owed him out of his first quarter's salary. He was never heard of in the colonies again.

A friendly and genial soul like Franklin cannot be long in a place without finding companions. His intimates at

this period were three young men of his own rank and condition, dissimilar in character, but bound together by a common love of books. Charles Osborne and Joseph Watson were clerks to a conveyancer, and James Ralph was clerk to a merchant. "Watson," says Franklin, "was a pious, sensible young man of great integrity." But the others, he adds, were lax in their principles, particularly Ralph, to whom Franklin had imparted his own deistical opinions. Osborne had good sense and sincerity, was friendly and affectionate, but, in literary matters, exceedingly critical. Osborne, Ralph, and Franklin were all fond of poetry, and were in the habit of producing little pieces for the amusement of the circle. "Many pleasant walks," says Franklin, "we had together on Sundays, on the banks of the Schuylkill, where we read to one another, and conferred on what we had read."

"It was proposed," he says in his Autobiography, "that we should each of us, at our next meeting, produce a piece of our own composing, in order to improve by our mutual observations, criticisms, and corrections. As language and expression were what we had in view, we excluded all considerations of invention by agreeing that the task should be a version of the Eighteenth Psalm, which describes the descent of the Deity. When the time of our meeting drew nigh, Ralph called on me first, and let me know his piece was ready; I told him I had been busy, and having little inclination, had done nothing. He then showed me his piece for my opinion, and I much approved it, as it appeared to me to have great merit. 'Now,' said he, 'Osborne never will allow the least merit in anything of mine, but makes a thousand criticisms out of mere envy: he is not so jealous of you; I wish, therefore, you would take this piece

and produce it as yours. I will pretend not to have had time, and so produce nothing; we shall then hear what he will say to it.' It was agreed, and I immediately transcribed it, that it might appear in my own hand. We met: Watson's performance was read; there were some beauties in it, but many defects. Osborne's was read; it was much better. Ralph did it justice, remarked some faults, but applauded the beauties. He himself had nothing to produce. I was backward, seemed desirous of being excused, had not had sufficient time to correct, &c., but no excuse could be admitted; produce I must. It was read and repeated: Watson and Osborne gave up the contest, and joined in applauding it. Ralph only made some criticisms, and proposed some amendments; but I defended my text. Osborne was severe against Ralph, and told me he was no better able to criticise than to compose verses. As these two were returning home, Osborne expressed himself still more strongly in favour of what he thought my production; having before refrained, as he said, lest I should think he meant to flatter me. 'But who would have imagined,' said he, 'that Franklin was capable of such a performance; such painting, such force, such fire! He has even improved on the original. In common conversation he seems to have no choice of words; he hesitates and blunders, and yet, good God, how he writes!'"

The friends separated, Ralph secretly exulting in his triumph. When next they met, he disclosed the trick—to the discomfiture of the critical Osborne.

During this time, also, Franklin formed an attachment for Miss Deborah Read, which he had reason to think was returned. At that day, the right of parents to *give* their daughters in marriage, and to put an absolute veto upon a

rising passion, was not seriously disputed. A portion or dowry was regarded as essential to an honourable marriage, even in the lowlier walks of life ; and when that is the case, marriage will partake of the nature of a bargain ; the contracting parties being the parents who have a son to advance and the parents who have a daughter to establish. From his tombstone in Christ Church burying-ground, Philadelphia, we learn that Mr John Read died September 12th, 1724, about two months before Franklin sailed for London. His remains lie at the head of the tomb of his daughter and her husband. It was therefore to the mother of Miss Read that young Franklin told his love, and revealed the prospect he had of being a master printer. The prudent lady, without disapproving the match, reminded the enamoured youth that neither himself nor the young lady were yet nineteen years old, and that a marriage then, as he was on the eve of a long voyage, and about to engage in an uncertain enterprise, would be unwise. He was to wait until he had returned and was established in business. Having thus arranged it with the mother, he addressed the daughter. She avowed her affection for him, and they were engaged.

The summer passed away ; the autumn was nearly at an end, and the day for the sailing of the *London-Hope*, Captain Annis, which had been several times postponed, was at hand. Sir William Keith had continued to invite the young printer to his house, when he always spoke of setting him up in business as a settled purpose. He promised to give him letters of introduction to his friends in London, as well as the letter of credit with which to buy types, paper, and a press. A day was even named when the young man should call and receive the letters. At the time appointed, the Governor said he had not been able to get them ready, and

fixed another time. Franklin called again, and received the same answer. Again and again he called, with no other result. At length the vessel was at the point of sailing, and Franklin went to take leave of the Governor, expecting confidently to receive the important letters. The secretary of Sir William came out to see him on this occasion,—told him the Governor was extremely busy in writing, but would meet him at Newcastle, where the ship was to anchor, and there the letters should be delivered to him.

He went on board ; the ship weighed anchor, and glided down the river. The young voyager was not companionless. James Ralph, giving out that he was going abroad to establish a business correspondence, had in reality resolved to abandon his wife and child, and try for fame and fortune in London. This purpose he did not impart to Franklin until they had reached England, and then gave as excuse for his crime, that he had been treated ill by his wife's relatives.

At Newcastle, thirty-two miles below Philadelphia, Franklin called again upon the Governor for the letters ; and again the secretary appeared to make excuses. He said Sir William Keith regretted deeply that he could not see his young friend ; but he really could not, as he was engaged in business of the utmost importance. The letters, however, should be sent on board in time, and the Governor heartily wished him a good voyage and a speedy return.

Puzzled, but not suspecting harm, the young man returned to the ship ; and ere long a bag of letters and despatches from the Governor was brought on board by Colonel French, and delivered to the captain. Franklin asked for those that were directed to him. The captain replied that all the letters were in the bag together, and he was then too busy

to pick them out ; but before the ship reached England, Franklin should himself overhaul the bag and take from it the letters that belonged to him.

No one had yet noticed the two young men amid the great bustle of the departure. Strangers to all on board, there was no room found for them in the chief cabin, and they were obliged to make shift with a berth in the steerage. It chanced that a great man of the colony, Andrew Hamilton, a former Attorney-General of Pennsylvania, and his son, had taken passage in the ship. Circumstances, however, prevented his departure, and he returned to Philadelphia, and went to London by the next ship. The berths secured for himself and his son were thus left vacant. When Colonel French came on board he recognised Franklin, and treated him with a great show of respect, which induced the passengers to invite the two friends to take the vacant berths ; so they lost no time in changing their quarters.

The good ship *London-Hope* got to sea about the 10th of November. The passage was long and rough. Toward the end of the voyage, Captain Annis gave Franklin an opportunity, as he had promised, to examine the contents of the letter-bag. He found six or seven letters upon which his name was written, for the purpose of denoting that they were under his *care*. As one of these was addressed to the King's printer, and another to a stationer, he thought they might be the letters so often promised.

The ship finally reached London, December 24th. Franklin called forthwith upon the stationer at his shop, and handing him the letter, said it was from Governor Keith. "I don't know such a person!" said the man. He opened the letter, however, and glanced over it. "Oh!" he cried, "this is from Riddlesden. I have lately found him to

be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him." Having said these words, he put the letter back into Franklin's hand, turned on his heel, and proceeded to serve a customer.

The rest of the letters, he found, were not written by Keith. Beginning now to doubt the Governor's sincerity, he gave a statement of the whole affair to Mr Denham, a friend whom he had won on the voyage. Mr Denham, who comprehended the matter in a moment, assured him there was not the slightest probability that Keith had either written him any letters, or had ever meant to do so. No one who knew Keith, he added, placed the least dependence on anything he said; and as to the letter of credit, the idea was ridiculous, for he had no credit to give. Franklin heard this with amazement and alarm, for he and Ralph were alone in the wilderness of London, and their whole stock of money, all of which belonged to Franklin, was fifteen pistoles, equal to little more than ten pounds sterling. Franklin revealed his uneasiness to M^r Denham, who advised him to seek employment in the way of his trade. "Among the printers here," said he, "you will improve yourself, and when you return to America, you will set up to greater advantage."

To add to his dismay, he now learned that his comrade intended to remain in London. He also knew that Ralph, having spent all the money he could raise in paying his passage, was absolutely penniless, and had not a friend in England except himself, who could help him with a guinea.

Franklin's comments on the atrocious duplicity of Keith have often been admired, and justly. "What shall we think," he asks, "of a governor playing such pitiful tricks, and imposing so grossly upon a poor ignorant boy? It was

a habit he had acquired ; he wished to please everybody, and having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious, sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good governor for the people, though not for his constituents, the proprietaries, whose instructions he sometimes disregarded ; several of our best laws were of his planning, and passed during his administration." The unresentful character of these remarks may have been due, in some degree, to the fact that they were written after Keith had bitterly expiated his errors.

Upon reading the letter which the stationer had thrust back into his hand, the youth found that a scheme of villainy had been formed against Mr Andrew Hamilton, upon whose arrival soon after, in London, Franklin sought him out, and revealed what he had discovered. This revelation, which proved to be of great advantage to the lawyer, made him Franklin's friend and helper as long as he lived.



CHAPTER V.

EXPERIENCES IN LONDON.



THE two young Americans took lodgings together in the street called Little Britain, at three and sixpence a week. They were inseparable companions. Ralph was dependent upon Franklin, and Franklin loved Ralph as men often love their inferiors who are also their opposites. Ralph was so eloquent in conversation, that fifty years later, when Franklin had associated with the ablest men in Europe and America, he could still think that he had "never known a prettier talker." Ralph's manners, also, were engaging, and he really possessed talent. His misfortune was, that having talent, he had not talent enough. At this period, too, he exhibited many amiable and endearing traits, which compelled his friend to love him, after he had shown himself unworthy. One who had known these two young men at this time—Franklin, slow and hesitating in speech, solid and often grave in aspect, intent chiefly on getting forward in the world as a man of business; and Ralph, handsome, well-mannered, eloquent, and ambitious—would surely have said that it was Ralph, if either, who was destined to greatness.

Franklin, however, had over his brilliant companion two advantages, which were commonplace indeed, but, just

then, of the first importance, namely,—ten pounds in his pocket, and a trade at his finger ends that would bring him in thirty shillings a week; for Franklin was one of the swiftest of compositors. Without difficulty or delay, he obtained work at the great printing-house of Palmer, in Bartholomew Close, wherein fifty men were employed. But Ralph sought employment in vain. His first thought was the stage; but a noted comedian to whom he applied assuring him that he could not excel as an actor, he proposed to a publisher to write for him a weekly paper on the plan of the *Spectator*. The publisher declined the proposal, and Ralph was fain to seek for copying from the lawyers. But not even copying could he get. Meanwhile he remained dependent upon Franklin, whose pistoles, one after another, he was obliged to borrow. For nearly a year Franklin continued to work at Palmer's printing-house, earning good wages, and spending them.

An interesting episode in Franklin's life occurred at this time. One of the works upon which our young compositor was employed at Palmer's was Wollaston's "Religion of Nature Delineated," an exceedingly popular book in the last century. This work may be described as an attempt to educe the Church of England from "the depths of the author's own consciousness." His aim was to show that such crimes as murder, theft, and adultery, *would* have been wrong, even though they had not been forbidden, and that all the virtues *would* have been obligatory, though they had not been commanded. He finds, in nature, reasons for not worshipping graven images, arguments for church-going, and proofs of the immortality of the soul.

This most harmless and most amiable of books excited such antagonistic thoughts in the active mind of our com-

positor, that he wrote and printed a pamphlet of thirty-two pages to refute it. Mr Wollaston began his treatise in these words: "The foundation of religion lies in that difference between the acts of men which distinguishes them into *good, evil, indifferent*. For if there is such a difference, there must be religion, and *contra*." It was upon this assertion that Franklin threw himself with all his youthful power. His pamphlet was entitled, "A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain," and bore upon the title-page these lines of Dryden:—

"Whatever is, is right. But purblind man
Sees but a part of the chain, the nearest links;
His eyes not carrying to that equal beam
That poises all above."

Wollaston addressed his treatise to "A. F., Esq.," so Franklin addressed his dissertation to "Mr J. R.," Mr James Ralph. Wollaston apologises for his work by saying that his friend, "A. F., Esq.," had once asked him, "Is there any such thing as natural religion, and if there is, what is it?" Franklin begins with this observation: "I have here, according to your request, given you my present thoughts on the general state of things in the universe."

In this ingenious and daring production, Franklin carries negation to the extreme. His arguments proved that he had now lost the hope of retaining his personal identity beyond the grave; and he does not appear to have regretted the loss.

After writing this pamphlet, the consequence of the young compositor in the printing-office was greatly enhanced, though his employer expostulated with him upon the principles of his dissertation, which he thought objectionable. A copy fell into the hands of Mr Lyons, a surgeon,

author of a book entitled, "The Infallibility of Human Judgment," a gentleman who was intimate with the noted sceptics of the day. Lyons sought out the young author, and showed him marked attention. He took him to an alehouse called "The Horns," where a club of freethinkers assembled, the soul and head of which was Dr Mandeville, author of "The Fable of the Bees," a work much in harmony with Franklin's dissertation. Lyons introduced Franklin to this jovial Dutchman, then well advanced in years; and he also introduced the young man to Dr Pemberton, physician, natural philosopher, mathematician, member of the Royal Society, and a friend of Sir Isaac Newton. He was at that very time editing the third and final edition of the "Principia," which appeared in 1726. Dr Pemberton promised to give Franklin an opportunity of seeing Sir Isaac, which Franklin extremely desired. But the great philosopher, then past eighty-two, was sinking under the infirmities of age, and the opportunity never occurred.

About the same time Franklin became acquainted with another person of great celebrity, Sir Hans Sloane, founder of the British Museum, and already the possessor of an unparalleled private collection of curiosities. Franklin had brought to London, among other curious articles, a purse made of asbestos, a great rarity then. Sir Hans having heard of this, and keen on the scent of a novelty, went in person to the lodgings of the young man from the northern parts of America, paid him handsomely for his asbestos, and had him at his house in Bloomsbury Square, where he showed him all his marvellous store of curiosities.

Franklin bestirred himself to mend his fortunes. In expectation of more profitable work, he left Palmer's, and

obtained a place at Watt's printing-house, near Lincoln's-Inn - Fields, an establishment still more extensive than Palmer's. We have some pleasing incidents of the time spent by him at Watt's.

Little Britain, where he had lodged during his stay in London, is a little ancient street, only a few steps from Bartholomew Close, in which was situated Palmer's printing-house. The consequent want of exercise beginning to tell upon his system, he preferred to work in the press-room of his new place of employment. At this period of his life he drank only water. His fellow-pressmen, nearly fifty in number, were great drinkers of beer. Nevertheless, the Water-American, as they nicknamed him, carried up and down stairs a forme on each hand, while the beer-drinkers carried but one on both hands. They wondered that he, who, they supposed, derived no strength from his drink, should be stronger than themselves who drank strong beer. "My companion at the press," says Franklin, "drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner; a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom; but it was necessary, he supposed, to drink *strong* beer, that he might be *strong* to labour. I endeavoured to convince him that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley, dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread, and, therefore, if he could eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer. He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that vile liquor,—

an expense I was free from; and thus these poor devils keep themselves always under."

When he had worked for some weeks among the pressmen, he was transferred, by the desire of his employer, to the composing-room. The compositors demanded an entrance-fee of five shillings, the sum expected of all newcomers. As he had already paid a fee on entering the establishment, he considered the new demand an imposition; and Mr Watt being of the same opinion, he refused to pay it. He held out two or three weeks, but so many annoying little practical jokes were played upon him and his work, that he was glad to pay the money at last; convinced, as he records, of the folly of being on ill terms with people with whom one has to live continually. Being then on a friendly footing with his new companions, he acquired over them the influence due to his superior talents and knowledge.

A talent for repartee goes a great way in any workshop, and is nowhere more enjoyed than in a printing-office. Franklin's readiness in this respect made him popular, and aided to give weight, perhaps, to his opinions and his example. Great, indeed, must have been the force of an example, and admirable the tact of an understanding, capable of convincing Englishmen that water-gruel is better than beer! But even this triumph of reason over habit was vouchsafed to the young philosopher. "From my example," he says, "a great many of them left their muddling breakfast of beer, bread, and cheese, finding they could with me be supplied from a neighbouring house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz., three-halfpence. This was a more

comfortable as well as a cheaper breakfast, and kept their heads clearer. Those who continued sotting with their beer all day, were often, by not paying, out of credit at the alehouse, and used to make interest with me to get beer, their *light*, as they phrased it, *being out*. I watched the pay-table on Saturday night, and collected what I stood engaged for them, having to pay sometimes near thirty shillings a week on their account."

Besides this triumph, he carried, against much opposition, some valuable changes in the printing-house laws. His extreme quickness at composition, and his regularity of attendance, recommended him to the master, and procured him a large share of the work at which the best wages could be earned. His steady industry and improved habits enabled him to replenish his purse, and he went on for several months without interruption or drawback.

His eagerness to save money led him to practice one piece of economy that cannot be admired. Removing to lodgings in Duke Street, in order to be nearer the printing-house, he agreed, at first, to pay three and sixpence a week; and the landlady was induced to accept so moderate a remuneration by her desire to have the protection of a man in her house. He heard, soon after, of a lodging which he could have for two shillings a week, and proposed to remove to it. His landlady, however, was so pleased with her lodger, and so much enjoyed his conversation in the evenings, that she offered to throw off two shillings a week if he would remain. "So," he says, "I remained with her at one shilling and sixpence as long as I stayed in London." This economy was the less commendable because the landlady was as agreeable to the lodger as the lodger was to the landlady. She was an extremely entertaining old lady, full

of anecdote and kindness. She was so lame that she could seldom leave her room, and often invited Franklin to spend an evening with her. Her company, he admits, was so highly amusing to him, that he never wished to decline her invitation. At supper-time, the old lady would spread a most frugal repast ; half an anchovy for each, on a very thin slice of bread and butter, and half a pint of ale between them. But her thousand anecdotes of the last four reigns, derived from personal intercourse with leading families, were an exhaustless entertainment to him.

One of Franklin's fellow-workmen at Watt's printing-house was David Hall, who was afterwards his partner in Philadelphia for many years. Another named Wygate, a man of considerable education, was his frequent companion. He taught Wygate and a friend of his to swim in two lessons, an incident that came near diverting him from his proper career. Joining a party of Wygate's friends from the country, who were going to visit Chelsea, he was entreated, as they were returning by water, to give the company an exhibition of his feats in swimming. Franklin, seldom reluctant to take to the water, stripped, leaped in, performed all the tricks he knew, and swam without resting from near Chelsea to Blackfriars, a distance of four miles. He had long ago exhausted the science of swimming ; he could do all that was possible both on the water and under the water. The company were amazed at his skill and endurance, and Wygate conceived such a fondness for him, that he proposed they should make the tour of Europe together, supporting themselves everywhere by their trade.

At first he was inclined to embrace the proposition, and mentioned it to Mr Denham, with whom he had maintained an acquaintance ever since they had landed from the *London*.

Hope together. Mr Denham did more than dissuade him. He urged him to think only of returning to Pennsylvania; which he was himself about to do, with a great cargo of merchandise. This Mr Denham was one of those merchants whose scrupulous honesty first rescued the name of merchant from opprobrium, and gradually made it honourable throughout Christendom. After failing in business at Bristol, he emigrated to America, where, in a few years, he gained a large fortune. He returned to England, as we have seen, and on reaching Bristol, invited all his old creditors to dinner. Before going to the table, he made them a little address, in which he thanked them for the easy composition with which they had favoured him after his bankruptcy. At the end of the first course, when the plates were removed, every man found before him a check for the amount still due him, with interest added. He was now about to resume his business in America. He offered Franklin the place of clerk and book-keeper in the extensive store which he proposed to open in Philadelphia. The salary of the place, fifty pounds a year, was less than the wages Franklin was then earning as a compositor. But Denham engaged, as soon as the young man should have become acquainted with mercantile business, to send him with a cargo to the West Indies, and procure him commissions from other merchants, and in other ways assist him to get into business for himself.

Franklin was tired of London and dissatisfied with the life he had led there. Often had he recalled with pleasure the innocent and happy months he had passed in Philadelphia, and had often longed to revisit those pleasant scenes. He accepted Mr Denham's offer. He took leave of the printing-house, as he supposed, for ever, and was occupied,

day after day, in packing and forwarding merchandise. When all had been stowed on board the ship, some days still remained before the time fixed for her departure.

On one of these days he was surprised to receive a request to visit Sir William Wyndham, a man of great celebrity at that time, from his having been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Bolingbroke administration, and a sharer in the persecutions of his brilliant chief. He waited upon the great man. Sir William told him that he had heard of his swimming from Chelsea to Blackfriars, and also of his having taught the two young men to swim in a few hours. He said that he had two sons about to set out on their travels, who, he wished, should be taught to swim before starting, and if Franklin would teach them, he would pay him liberally for his trouble. Greatly to his regret, he was compelled to decline the offer, as the young men had not yet come to town, and his own stay was uncertain. He was so struck with the incident, that he thought if the proposal had been made to him before he had engaged himself to Mr Denham, he should have remained in England and opened a swimming school.



CHAPTER VI.

RETURN TO PHILADELPHIA.



THE *Berkshire*, Captain Clark, the ship in which Benjamin Franklin had taken out his passage to Philadelphia, dropped down to Gravesend in the afternoon of July 21st, anchored there late in the same evening, and remained two days. Franklin, who was much ashore during these two days, has, in a diary which he kept during the voyage, recorded his opinion of the people of Gravesend in the language of a man who has been cheated: "This Gravesend is a *cursed biting* place; the chief dependence of the people being the advantage they make of imposing upon strangers. If you buy any thing of them, and give half what they ask, you pay twice as much as the thing is worth. Thank God, we shall leave it to-morrow."

And so they did. After beating about in the channel for four days, they anchored off Portsmouth, and the captain, Mr Denham, and Mr Denham's clerk, went on shore to view the wonders of the dockyard. The ship lay between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight for some days, during which Franklin made excursions into the island, visiting Cowes and Carisbrook Castle.

For many days longer the ship was near the Isle of Wight, weighing anchor, casting anchor, tacking across the Solent, attempting to get to sea, and being blown back

again to Spithead. One sorry adventure which befell a party of the passengers at the little town of Yarmouth, in the Isle of Wight, Franklin relates at some length. Returning to Yarmouth after dark, from a long walk into the island, they found themselves on the wrong side of the harbour; they had headed and crossed the creek, the expansion of which forms the harbour. They were directed to a ferry near the mouth of the creek, where a boy would row them over to the town.

“But,” says Franklin, “when we came to the house the lazy whelp was in bed, and refused to rise and put us over; upon which we went down to the water-side, with a design to take his boat, and go over by ourselves. We found it very difficult to get the boat, it being fastened to a stake, and the tide risen near fifty yards beyond it. I stripped all to my shirt to wade up to it; but, missing the causeway, which was under water, I got up to my middle in mud. At last I came to the stake; but, to my great disappointment, found the boat was locked and chained. I endeavoured to draw the staple with one of the thole-pins, but in vain; I tried to pull up the stake, but to no purpose; so that, after an hour’s fatigue and trouble in the wet and mud, I was forced to return without the boat.

“We had no money in our pockets, and therefore began to conclude to pass the night in some haystack, though the wind blew very cold and very hard. In the midst of these troubles one of us recollected that he had a horse-shoe in his pocket, which he found in his walk, and asked me if I could not wrench the staple out with that. I took it, went, tried, and succeeded, and brought the boat ashore to them. Now we rejoiced, and all got in, and, when I had dressed myself, we put off. But the worst of all our troubles was

to come yet ; for, it being high water and the tide over all the banks, though it was moonlight, we could not discern the channel of the creek ; but, rowing heedlessly straight forward, when we were got about half-way over, we found ourselves aground on a mud bank ; and, striving to row her off by putting our oars in the mud, we broke one, and there stuck fast, not having four inches water. We were now in the utmost perplexity, not knowing what in the world to do,—we could not tell whether the tide was rising or falling ; but at length we plainly perceived it was ebb, and we could feel no deeper water within the reach of our oar.

“It was hard to lie in an open boat all night, exposed to the wind and weather ; but it was worse to think how foolish we should look in the morning, when the owner of the boat should catch us in that condition where we must be exposed to the view of all the town. After we had strove and struggled for half an hour and more, we gave all over, and sat down with our hands before us, despairing to get off ; for, if the tide had left us, we had been never the nearer,—we must have sat in the boat, as the mud was too deep for us to walk ashore through it, being up to our necks. At last, we bethought ourselves of some means of escaping ; and two of us stripped and got out, and thereby lightening the boat, we drew her upon our knees near fifty yards into deeper water ; and then with much ado, having but one oar, we got safe ashore under the fort ; and, having dressed ourselves and tied the man’s boat, we went with great joy to the Queen’s Head, where we left our companions, whom we found waiting for us, though it was very late. Our boat being gone on board, we were obliged to lie ashore all night ; and thus ended our walk.”

After beating about in the channel for nearly three weeks,

the *Berkshire* lost the land, and stood out into the Atlantic. The progress of the vessel was as monotonous as it was long.

On the voyage, Franklin reflected much upon the errors of his past life, and drew up a plan for the regulation of his future conduct. This plan was long supposed to be lost, but there are reasons for concluding that a set of rules published in a Philadelphia magazine, many years ago, is the missing document ; or, at least, a part of it. They were copied from a paper in Franklin's hand. The rules are prefaced by a remark quite in the manner of our wise young voyager.

"Those who write of the art of poetry," says Franklin, "teach us that, if we would write what may be worth reading, we ought always, before we begin, to form a regular plan and design of our piece: otherwise we shall be in danger of ineongruity. I am apt to think it is the same as to life. I have never fixed a regular design in life, by which means it has been a confused variety of different scenes. I am now entering upon a new one; let me, therefore, make some resolutions, and form some scheme of action, that henceforth I may live, in all respects, like a rational creature.

"1. It is necessary for me to be extremely frugal for some time, till I have paid what I owe.

"2. To endeavour to speak truth in every instance, to give nobody expectations that are not likely to be answered, but aim at sincerity in every word and action,—the most amiable excellence in a rational being.

"3. To apply myself industriously to whatever business I take in hand, and not divert my mind from my business by any foolish project of growing suddenly rich; for industry and patience are the surest means of plenty.

"4. I resolve to speak ill of no man whatever, not even in a matter of truth; but rather, by some means, excuse the faults I hear charged upon others, and, upon proper occasions, speak all the good I know of everybody."

He did not stop here. The conduct of his life was frequently the subject of his meditations from this time,—with what results we shall see ere long.

The Atlantic Ocean, at that day, was in every respect a waste of waters. The *Berkshire* had been at sea fifty days before her passengers saw another vessel. The whole company were thrilled with delight when, at length, they not only saw a friendly ship, but came near enough to speak to her. Franklin himself was deeply moved at the sight. "She was the *Snow* from Dublin," he wrote, "bound to New York, having upwards of fifty servants on board, of both sexes. They all appeared upon deck, and seemed very much pleased at the sight of us. There is really something strangely cheering to the spirits in the meeting of a ship at sea, containing a society of creatures of the same species and in the same circumstances with ourselves, after we had been long separated and excommunicated, as it were, from the rest of mankind. My heart fluttered in my breast with joy, when I saw so many human countenances, and I could scarce refrain from that kind of laughter which proceeds from some degree of inward pleasure."

Sixteen days after, to the still greater joy of all on board, the look-out at the *Berkshire* mast-head, shouted, LAND! "I could not discern it as soon as the rest," Franklin writes; "my eyes were dimmed with the suffusion of two small drops of joy." Two days later, at eight in the evening, the ship cast anchor in the Delaware, six miles below Philadelphia. Franklin concludes his journal with these words:—

“Some young Philadelphians happening to be out upon their pleasure in a boat, came on board, and offered to take us up with them. We accepted of their kind proposal, and about ten o'clock landed at Philadelphia, heartily congratulating each other upon our having happily completed so tedious and dangerous a voyage. Thank God!”

Soon after landing, Franklin met, in the streets of Philadelphia, Sir William Keith, who had been recently deposed from office. Keith had just virtue enough to look a little abashed at seeing the youth he had so shamefully wronged, and passed by without speaking. For nearly a quarter of a century longer, this man lagged superfluous on the scene, poor and neglected, striving to earn a little money by writing histories of the colonies. He died in London, in 1749, aged eighty.

Indifferent as Franklin had been to Miss Read, he had not forgotten her. Toward the close of his stay in London, when he had escaped the fascinating Ralph, and Franklin began to be himself again, his affection appears to have revived; for he wrote, long after, that it was “the cords of love” that had “drawn him back from England to Philadelphia.” He returned to find the lady married and miserable; and both through his fault. Despairing of his return, her mother and other relations had persuaded her to marry “one Rogers, a potter,” to use Franklin’s own language. He was an excellent potter; which was the inducement to Mrs Read. But he proved to be a worthless fellow, and it was soon suspected that he had another wife. Deborah Read, who had never lived happily with him, returned to her mother, and resumed her maiden name, a sorrowful woman. The potter ran away from his creditors in the

following year, and went to the West Indies, whence came, not long after, a rumour of his death.

Keimer appeared to have greatly thriven during the absence of his journeyman. He had removed to a better house ; his shop was well supplied with stationery, and his printing-office with new type. He employed several hands, and seemed to have a great deal of business.

Our young friend was soon at work. Mr Denham took a store in Water Street, and opened for sale his large stock of goods. His clerk, entering upon his new vocation with all his old ardour and diligence, soon became an adept in book-keeping, and an expert salesman. He loved and respected his employer, who, in turn, had a sincere affection for his clerk, and treated him with paternal kindness. They lived in the same house, and went on together so happily that Franklin seemed destined to pass his days as a Philadelphia merchant. There was every probability of his becoming, ere long, a partner in the concern, and of finally succeeding to Mr Denham's place at its head. Well content with his employment, his employer, and his prospects, his only unhappiness sprang from the recollection of his still unpaid debt to Mr Vernon, and from reflecting upon his injustice to Miss Read, and its bitter consequences.

Promising as were the prospects of Franklin during the first few months after his return, his mercantile career was destined to a speedy and abrupt termination. Early in February 1727, four months after the opening of the store, Mr Denham and himself were both taken seriously ill. Franklin's disease, the pleurisy, brought him to the verge of the grave. "I suffered a good deal," he records, "gave up the point in my own mind, and was at the time rather disappointed when I found myself recovering ; regretting,

in some degree, that I must now, some time or other, have all that disagreeable work to go over again." Mr Denham struggled long with his complaint, but sunk under it at last. On his death-bed he signified his desire to bequeath his young friend a small legacy as a token of his good-will. The store was taken in charge by the executors, and Franklin was without employment.

His first thought was to find another clerkship. Not succeeding in this, he reluctantly accepted an offer of large wages from Keimer, who wished him to superintend the printing-office, while himself took charge of the stationery-shop. In London, where Keimer had formerly lived, and where he had a wife then living, Franklin had heard so bad a character of the man, that he was unwilling to have anything more to do with him. But necessity knows no law, and he found himself again in Keimer's chaotic printing-office, striving to reduce it to order. Keimer had engaged five hands, at very low wages, who were unacquainted with the trade, and whom the new foreman was expected to convert into efficient printers. One of these was John, "a wild Irishman," brought up to no business, whose services for four years Keimer had bought of the captain who had brought him over. John saved the new foreman a world of trouble by running away, a practice to which bought servants were much addicted. Another of Keimer's men was Hugh Meredith, an honest countryman, a man of sense, experience, and reading, but given to drinking, and not fond of his new trade. Another was Stephen Potts, also a countryman, witty, capable, but not too industrious. Another was George Webb, a young scapegrace from Oxford University, who, having spent all his money in London, had procured a passage to America, by binding himself to

serve for four years. Keimer had bought his time of the captain of the ship. He was full of wit and good-nature, but extremely idle and thoughtless. To this catalogue must be added David Harry, an apprentice from the country.

Franklin, who had the art of being always cheerful, was soon at home among Keimer's merry men ; and teaching them something new in their vocation every day, he stood high in their esteem. He even managed to cast type, from his London recollections of the process. He cut small engravings, made the ink, assisted in bookbinding, served as warehouseman, and was of Keimer's establishment the vital principle. The green hands became less and less inexpert ; order emerged from chaos, and Keimer was in a fair way of founding a profitable business. The foreman prevailed upon Hugh Meredith to forego his dram-drinking for a time—to the great joy of his father, a man of some consideration in the colony. Franklin was especially fortunate in having two days in every week for study, as Keimer still persisted in keeping holy the last day of the week.



CHAPTER VII.

THE JUNTO.



ABOUT this time Franklin formed his fellow-workmen, and a few of his young friends in the town, into that celebrated club, THE JUNTO, which, for forty years, was a means of happiness and benefit to all who belonged to it. Its first members were eleven in number: the four printers, Benjamin Franklin, Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, and George Webb, all very "clubbable men;" Joseph Breintnal, an engrosser of deeds, ingenious, good-natured, excessively fond of poetry, himself a tolerable versifier; Thomas Godfrey, a self-taught mathematician, of real ability, but too precise and argumentative for a club; Nicholas Scull, a surveyor, who loved books and wrote verses; William Parsons, a shoemaker by trade, a well-read man, afterwards surveyor-general of Pennsylvania; William Maugridge, a carpenter, extremely skilful in his trade, a solid, sensible man; Robert Grace, a young gentleman of some fortune—whom Franklin loved—generous, witty, "a lover of punning and of his friends;" William Coleman, then a merchant's clerk, afterwards a leading merchant, and judge, of whom Franklin says, "he had the coolest, clearest head, the best heart, and the exactest morals, of almost any man I ever met with."

The purpose of the Junto was the improvement of its members and their fellow-citizens in virtue, knowledge, and practical wisdom. A candidate for admission to the Junto was obliged to declare, standing, with one hand laid upon his breast, that he had "no particular disrespect" for any member of the Junto; that he loved mankind in general, of whatsoever profession or religion; that he thought no person ought to be harmed in his body, name, or goods, for mere speculative opinion, or for his external way of worship; that he loved the truth for the truth's sake, and would endeavour impartially to find and receive it, and communicate it to others. The club met every Friday evening, when twenty-four queries were read, "a pause between each while one might fill and drink a glass of wine." These questions were the following:—

"Have you read over these queries this morning, in order to consider what you might have to offer the Junto touching any one of them? viz. :

"1. Have you met with anything in the author you last read remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto, particularly in history, morality, poetry, physic, travels, mechanic arts, or other parts of knowledge?

"2. What new story have you lately heard agreeable for telling in conversation?

"3. Hath any citizen in your knowledge failed in his business lately, and what have you heard of the cause?

"4. Have you lately heard of any citizens thriving well, and by what means?

"5. Have you lately heard how any present rich man, here or elsewhere, got his estate?

"6. Do you know of a fellow-citizen, who has lately done a worthy action, deserving praise and imitation; or who has

lately committed an error, proper for us to be warned against and avoid?

“7. What unhappy effects of intemperance have you lately observed or heard; of imprudence, of passion, or of any other vice or folly?

“8. What happy effects of temperance, of prudence, of moderation, or of any other virtue?

“9. Have you or any of your acquaintance been lately sick or wounded? If so, what remedies were used, and what were their effects?

“10. Whom do you know that are shortly going voyages or journeys, if one should have occasion to send by them?

“11. Do you think of anything at present, in which the Junto may be serviceable to *mankind*, to their country, to their friends, or to themselves?

“12. Hath any deserving stranger arrived in town since last meeting, that you have heard of? And what have you heard or observed of his character or merits? And whether, think you, it lies in the power of the Junto to oblige him, or encourage him as he deserves?

“13. Do you know of any deserving young beginner lately set up, whom it lies in the power of the Junto any way to encourage?

“14. Have you lately observed any defect in the laws of your *country*, of which it would be proper to move the legislature for an amendment? Or do you know of any beneficial law that is wanting?

“15. Have you lately observed any encroachment on the just liberties of the people?

“16. Hath anybody attacked your reputation lately? And what can the Junto do towards securing it?

“17. Is there any man whose friendship you want, and which the Junto, or any of them, can procure for you?”

“18. Have you lately heard any member’s character attacked, and how have you defended it?”

“19. Hath any man injured you, from whom it is in the power of the Junto to procure redress?”

“20. In what manner can the Junto, or any of them, assist you in any of your honourable designs?”

“21. Have you any weighty affair on hand, in which you think the advice of the Junto may be of service?”

“22. What benefits have you lately received from any man not present?”

“23. Is there any difficulty in matters of opinion, of justice, and injustice, which you would gladly have discussed at this time?”

Besides conversing on the topics suggested by these queries, questions in science and morals were discussed, as in a debating society. Declamation was also one of the exercises, and an essay was expected to be read every night. In the pleasant season of the year, the Junto met once a month at “some proper place across the river for bodily exercise.” Franklin insisted that the debates should be wholly free from heat and acrimony. “They were to be conducted,” says Franklin, “in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute, or desire of victory; and, to prevent warmth, all expressions of positiveness in opinions, or direct contradiction, were, after some time, made contraband, and prohibited under small pecuniary penalties.”

In this happily constituted club Franklin took the greatest delight for many years. In the possession of one of his grandchildren is still preserved a manuscript book of Frank-

lin's filled with memoranda for the Junto, sketches of essays, replies to questions, topics for debate, and suggested rules. Many of the questions proposed by him for discussion were very suggestive of beneficial conversation, as well as characteristic of his own mind. I select a few as specimens: "Is self-interest the rudder that steers mankind?" "Can any one particular form of government suit all mankind?" "Which is least criminal, a bad action joined with a good intention, or a good action with a bad intention?" "How may the possession of the lakes be improved to our advantage?" "Why does the flame of a candle tend upward in a spire?" "Should it be the aim of philosophy to eradicate the passions?" "How shall we judge of the goodness of a writing?" "Can a man arrive at perfection in this life?" "Wherein consists the happiness of a rational creature?" "What general conduct of life is most suitable for men in such circumstances as most of the members of the Junto are? Or, of the many schemes of living which are in our power to pursue, which will be most probably conducive to our happiness?" "Which is best, to make a friend of a wise and good man that is poor, or of a rich man that is neither wise nor good?" "Which of the two is the greatest loss to a country if they both die?" "Which of the two is happiest in life?" In some of these questions we again perceive the daring intellect formed to investigate, and incapable of taking anything for granted.

The Junto was never permitted to have more than twelve members at the same time. The proceedings, for recording which the secretary was allowed one shilling a week, were designed to be kept secret. Alluring whispers, however, escaped, which caused frequent applications for admission into the charmed circle of embryo philosophers. The

founder of the club at length proposed that each member of the Junto should form a subordinate club, which should report its proceedings to the parent society, and thus extend the area of its influence. Five or six of these subordinate clubs were formed, which were called by such names as "The Vine," "The Union," and "The Band." In this way, as in other ways to be noticed hereafter, the Junto became the source of great good to Philadelphia, to the colonies, and to the United States.

The Junto was no sooner organised than it came near losing its founder. Six months of Franklin's connexion with Mr Keimer passed happily away. He then began to perceive a disagreeable change in the demeanour of his employer, from which he inferred that he had been engaged merely to train the raw hands, whose improvement daily rendered the services of the foreman less indispensable. At the end of the second quarter Keimer hinted, as he paid him his wages, that he felt the charge too heavy, and that a reduction of the salary would be no more than proper. He was more and more disposed to find fault, assumed the airs of a master, and was evidently but too willing to give offence to his foreman. Franklin endured this with the more patience, because, knowing that Keimer was deeply in debt for his materials and stationery, he attributed his petulance in part to his anxiety. Ere long, however, their connexion was violently severed. Attracted by a noise in the street one day, Franklin put his head out of the window to see what was the matter, and many of the neighbours did the same. The fated Keimer, incapable of perceiving that the retention of his foreman was his only chance to escape ruin, conceived that the opportunity to rid himself of that foreman had come. In a loud and

angry manner he ordered him to return to his business, and added many reproachful words, hard for a young man to bear in the presence of his acquaintances. He then came up into the printing-office, where he continued his senseless vituperation. Franklin replying to his abuse with becoming spirit, Keimer retorted by giving Franklin the quarter's warning for which both had stipulated, and said he wished he were not obliged to endure his presence even so long. "The wish is unnecessary," said the wrathful foreman; who instantly took his hat and walked out of the office, asking his friend Meredith to bring to his lodgings in the evening the few articles that he left behind.

He went home, and when his anger cooled, reflected upon his situation. He had some thoughts of returning to Boston. He had been four years away from home, and, upon the whole, had not, he thought, behaved very well, or done very well. He was not, naturally, of an economical turn. If he had occasionally saved a little money, he had contrived soon to get rid of it again. It was his own experience of the inconveniences that result from extravagance that caused him to dwell upon economy so frequently in his writings; for a spendthrift adores economy as much as a drunkard does temperance. There he was, after four years of adventure, a journeyman printer still, still in debt to Mr Vernon, with no great sum in his purse, out of employment, and two weeks' journey from his father's house. ✕

But Franklin was one of those of whom Emerson says, that planted upon a marble slab they will take root. In the evening Hugh Meredith came, and they talked over the events of the day. Meredith, who was warmly Franklin's friend, would not hear of his going back to Boston. Keimer, he said, was in debt for his entire stock, and his

creditors were already alarmed. Moreover, he was totally devoid of capacity for business ; he sold for cash without profit, and on credit without keeping accounts. Sooner or later he must fail, and create a vacancy for some one to fill. To this Meredith added an intimation far more interesting. He said, he felt sure that his father, from conversations he had had with him, would advance the sum necessary to set them both up in business, provided Franklin would consent to burden himself with so incompetent a partner. It was late in the autumn of 1727 when this conversation occurred. "My time," added Meredith, "will be out with Keimer in the spring ; by that time we may have our press and types in from London. I am sensible I am no workman ; if you like it, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish, and we will share the profits equally."

All this being highly agreeable to our disheartened young printer, he consented to Meredith's proposal. The father, who happened to be in town at the time, came into his son's plans with alacrity, saying, that as Franklin had great influence with his son, and had already prevailed upon him to abstain from dram-drinking for long periods, he would probably be able, when they were so closely united, to break him off that fatal habit entirely. Franklin drew up an inventory of the articles required, which Mr Meredith gave to a merchant, who sent to London for them by the next ship. It was agreed that the secret should be kept until the materials arrived, and, in the meantime, that Franklin should endeavour to get work at the printing-house of Andrew Bradford. It was soon ascertained, however, that Bradford had no vacancy, and Franklin passed some days in idleness.

Soon came a message to him from Keimer, to the effect

that old friends ought not to part for a few words spoken in a passion, and that Mr Keimer would be glad if his late foreman would return to his employment. This message being interpreted, signified that the adjacent province of New Jersey being about to make a new issue of paper-money, Samuel Keimer had hopes of being employed to print the same, and Benjamin Franklin was the only person at hand who was capable of making the requisite cuts. Meredith also entreated him to return, and he had the good sense to do so. Keimer obtained the printing of the paper-money. Franklin engraved the cuts and ornaments for the bills, contrived a copper-plate press for printing them, and, when all was ready, he and Keimer went to Burlington to execute the printing under the eye of the Legislature. There they remained three months. The printing was performed to the satisfaction of the Government, and Keimer received so large a sum for it that his downfall was deferred for two or three years. Franklin found valuable friends among the members of the Legislature, one of whom was required by law constantly to overlook the printers. "My mind," he modestly says, "having been much more improved by reading than Keimer's, I suppose it was for that reason that my conversation seemed to be more valued. They had me to their houses, introduced me to their friends, and showed me much civility ; while he, though the master, was a little neglected. In truth, he was an odd creature ; ignorant of common life ; fond of rudely opposing received opinions ; slovenly to extreme dirtiness ; enthusiastic in some points of religion, and a little knavish withal."

A sagacious old Jerseyman, who, from wheeling clay for brick-makers, had come to be a man of fortune and surveyor-general of the province, said to Franklin one day at

Burlington : “ I foresee you will soon work this man out of his business and make a fortune in it at Philadelphia.” This he said without knowing anything of the secret designs of Franklin and Meredith. These Jersey friends brought many a good job to Franklin’s printing-office in later years.

In the spring of 1728, soon after his return to Philadelphia from Burlington, the types and press arrived from London, and the young men prepared to begin business. Franklin made an amicable settlement with Keimer, and left him without breathing a word of the printing-house about to be established by Franklin and Meredith.


It was about this time that Franklin wrote the famous epitaph on himself, which has been so often printed :—

“ The Body
Of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
Printer,
(Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding,)
Lies here, food for worms.
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more,
In a new
And more beautiful edition,
Corrected and amended
By
The Author.”



CHAPTER VIII.

FRANKLIN AND MEREDITH, PRINTERS.

HE young printers began very prudently. They hired a house at twenty-four pounds a year, and relet the greater part of it to Thomas Godfrey, glazier and mathematician, that member of the Junto whose craving for mathematical exactness rendered his company disagreeable. When they had opened their types, set up their press, and bought the other appurtenances of a printing-office, their stock of cash was exhausted. Thus they began business without money, and in debt for nearly all their implements and materials.

In the nick of time, when indeed they were scarcely ready for customers, George House, an acquaintance of Franklin's, brought to the office a countryman whom he had found in the street looking for a printer. They executed for him a five-shilling job. "This man's five shillings," says Franklin, "being our first-fruits, and coming so seasonably, gave me more pleasure than any crown I have since earned; and, from the gratitude I felt towards House, has made me often more ready than perhaps I otherwise should have been to assist young beginners." This encouragement they needed the more, because there were not wanting dismal prophets to remind them that Philadelphia

had not a great deal of printing to do, and that there were already two established printers to do it.

The Junto was of essential use to the young firm. Every member of it exerted himself to procure work for them, and Joseph Breintnal had interest enough to get them the printing of a work, in which the Quakers were then deeply interested. It was a translation of a Dutch "History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People called Quakers." The price given for this work was so low, that Franklin felt it necessary to compose one sheet every day, which Meredith worked off upon the press. Even when interrupted by other work, he would finish his sheet before going to bed, though to do this he was obliged often to work till eleven at night. One night, when he had finished his prescribed task, one-half of it was accidentally thrown down. He set to work again immediately, distributed the disordered type, and composed the pages again before he left the office. Besides the ordinary work of a printer, he occasionally cast types, cut ornaments for title-pages, made his own ink, and lampblack for the ink.

The industry and energy of Franklin could not long escape attention. He heard afterwards, that mention was made of the new printing-office at the Merchants' every-night club, when the opinion prevailed that the attempt to establish a third printing-house in Philadelphia could not but result in failure. One gentleman present who lived near the office expressed a contrary opinion, saying, "The industry of that Franklin is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind. I see him still at work when I go home from the club, and he is at work again before his neighbours are out of bed." This remark made such an impression upon one of the merchants who heard it, that he offered to supply the

young men with stationery on credit ; but they were not yet prepared for business of that kind. Meanwhile they contrived to live by their printing, and to slowly extend their small and precarious business.

To establish a newspaper was a favourite project with Franklin from the first ; and before he had been in business a year, he had nearly completed his plan for beginning one. Franklin had a rare faculty for keeping a secret, but on this occasion it failed him. George Webb, the young runaway from Oxford, came into the office of Franklin and Meredith one day, and asked for employment as a journeyman, as he had bought the remainder of his time from Keimer. Franklin replied that they could not employ him then, but expected to have work for him soon. In strict confidence, he imparted to Webb the secret of the projected paper ; telling him that, as there was then but one newspaper in Philadelphia, and that one was very profitable, another paper well-conducted could scarcely fail to succeed. Webb immediately revealed the project to Keimer, who clutched at the idea, issued proposals for a paper of his own, and engaged the treacherous Webb to assist in printing it.

Franklin witnessed these proceedings of the babbling Webb and the foolish Keimer with indignation and contempt. When the *Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences*, as Keimer's paper was called, had been in existence for a month, he hit upon an expedient to draw away the attention of the public from its weekly issues. He began, in Bradford's *Mercury*, a series of extremely entertaining essays, in the manner of the *Spectator*. He signed his first paper "Busy-Body," and afterwards adopted that name as the heading of his department of the paper ; under which he gave a great variety of amusing matter, composed by

himself and his friends of the Junto. The first number of the "Busy-Body" was perfectly adapted to its purpose, since, besides being itself witty and satirical, it gave vague and tempting promises of sharp things to come. "It is probable," said the "Busy-Body," "that I may displease a great number of your readers, who will not very well like to pay ten shillings a year for being told of their faults. But—as most people delight in censure when they themselves are not the object of it—if any are offended at my publicly exposing their private vices, I promise they shall have the satisfaction, in a very little time, of seeing their good friends and neighbours in the same circumstances." He also announced that he should now and then devote a chapter to the service of the fair sex, whom, however, he engaged always to treat with "the utmost decency and respect."

It is evident that these contributions made a great and pleasant stir in the province. Keimer took offence at one of them, which he imagined contained some covert reflections upon himself. He replied to Franklin's delicate and piercing raillery by coarse and obscene abuse, both in prose and rhyme. He also complimented the "Busy-Body" by publishing essays as nearly resembling his as he could procure. In one of his pieces Franklin gave a long and good-humoured reply to the attacks of his old employer. In some of these early essays, Franklin's natural benevolence and public spirit are plainly manifest.

After writing a few numbers of the "Busy-Body," Franklin's attention was so strongly drawn to another class of subjects, that he abandoned that entertainment to his excellent friend Breintnal, who continued the series for several months.

For a year or more, Pennsylvania had been agitated by

the discussion of that perplexing subject, paper-money. The paper currency of the province, issued in 1723 for a limited period, amounted to but fifteen thousand pounds, and it was about to be called in. The people clamoured for a new and larger issue, to which capitalists objected, pointing to New England and South Carolina, where the paper-money had woefully depreciated. This subject, like all others that stirred the public mind, was amply debated in the Junto, where Franklin sided with those who favoured a re-issue. "I was persuaded," he says, "that the first small sum, struck in 1723, had done much good by increasing the trade, employment, and number of inhabitants in the province, since I now saw all the old houses inhabited, and many new ones building; whereas I remembered well, when I first walked about the streets of Philadelphia, (eating my roll,) I saw many of the houses in Walnut Street, between Second and Front Streets, with bills on their doors "*to be let;*" and many, likewise, in Chestnut Street and other streets, which made me think the inhabitants of the city were one after another deserting it."

His convictions upon the subject, however, were clear and strong. Having the whole subject at command through the incessant debates of the Junto, he devoted his leisure during the month of March 1729 to the composition of an extensive pamphlet, which was published anonymously soon after, entitled "A Modest Inquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency." To give it a learned air, he contrived to pick up for the title-page a Latin motto from Persius, to the effect that plenty of new money ought to be given to country and to kindred. Much of the reasoning of this pamphlet will not bear the light since thrown upon political economy, and there are several passages in it that

savour of special pleading. Nevertheless, for a self-instructed young man of twenty-three, in the year 1729, in the remote colony of Pennsylvania, it must be considered an extraordinary production. The young printer began by laying down a proposition, from which he deduced his conclusions. That proposition was: "There is a certain proportionate quantity of money requisite to carry on the trade of a country freely and currently, more than which would be of no advantage in trade, and less, if much less, exceedingly detrimental to it." The main conclusion, of course, was that Pennsylvania, without the proposed issue of paper-money, had less money than was needful for carrying on its trade freely and currently. But there is a great deal of ingenious argument and clear statement in the pamphlet, much of which must have struck the Pennsylvanians of that day with the force of novelty. Some of the remarks upon the nature of money, upon the principle of self-adjustment inherent in affairs, if the operation of that principle is not obstructed by unwise legislation, and upon labour as the standard of value, are quite in the modern spirit. He concludes by saying that his essay was "written and published in haste," and he shall esteem it a favour if gentlemen will point out the errors into which he may have fallen, as he sincerely desired "to be acquainted with the truth."

This pamphlet, it is said, had considerable effect in overcoming the opposition to the new issue, which, in due time, was made, with happy effects, as Franklin always thought, upon the prosperity of the province. He never wavered in his opinion, that paper-money, fully secured against depreciation, and not excessive in quantity, is advantageous to a state.

Notwithstanding the ability displayed by the "Busy-Body"

in the rival paper, Keimer continued to issue twenty-six numbers of the *Universal Instructor* without interruption. But at this time misfortune again overtook him, and a temporary interruption took place in the publication. His pecuniary difficulties were such that he could not make any arrangements satisfactory to his creditors. The paper struggled for a short time longer, but at last Keimer was forced to dispose of it to Franklin and Meredith, which he did, for an insignificant sum. Franklin undertook the editing of the paper, and Number Forty, for October 2, 1729, was the first issued under his hand. A great change was made in the newspaper. Its preposterous name was reduced to *Pennsylvania Gazette*, to which was added below in smaller type, "containing the freshest advices, foreign and domestic." There was the extraordinary number of seven advertisements in Number Forty, one of which informed the public that Franklin and Meredith had for sale the Psalms of Isaac Watts, a new work then, that was having a great sale on both sides of the ocean. The principal article in Number Forty, of an editorial nature, was the address to the subscribers, announcing the change of proprietors.

This disposed of, the address concluded thus:—"There are many who have long desired to see a good News-Paper in *Pennsylvania*; and we hope those gentlemen who are able, will contribute towards the making This such. We ask Assistance, because we are fully sensible, that to publish a good News-Paper is not so easy an Undertaking as many People imagine it to be. The Author of a Gazette (in the Opinion of the Learned) ought to be qualified with an extensive Acquaintance with Languages, a great Easiness and Command of Writing and Relating Things clearly and intelligibly, and in few Words; he should be able to speak

of War both by Land and Sea ; be well acquainted with Geography, with the History of the Time, with the several Interests of Princes and States, the Secrets of Courts, and the Manners and Customs of all Nations. Men thus accomplished are very rare in this remote Part of the World ; and it would be well if the Writer of these Papers could make up among his Friends what is wanting in himself. Upon the Whole, we may assure the Publick, that as far as the Encouragement we meet with will enable us, no Care and Pains shall be omitted, that may make the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as agreeable and useful an Entertainment as the Nature of the Thing will allow."

Franklin had not forgotten his boyish adventures in the *New England Courant*, and he profited by the disastrous experience of his brother James. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* was conducted with prudence ; not the mean prudence of a crafty coward, but with that noble prudence which comes of modesty, respect for the feelings of others, a desire to do real service, and an ability, rarely possessed by a young man, of looking at a subject in *all* its bearings, and of giving due weight to all.

For example :—His first editorial article related to the long-standing dispute between the Governor and the Legislature of New York, with regard to the salary of the Governor. Governor Burnet had been instructed to demand a *settled* salary for himself and his successors of a thousand pounds a year. The Legislature constantly refused, adhering to the ancient practice of voting the Governor's salary every year. Franklin's comments upon this affair contain so many distinct *prudences* that it would require a long chapter to enable the modern reader to understand them. He had to consider the recentness of the revolution of 1688, and

the need there was of still strengthening "the present establishment." He could not forget the favour which the Governor of New York had shown him when he was a runaway apprentice. Above all, he had to stand by the people, by the principles of English liberty, by Magna Charta, at which the demand for a settled salary aimed a blow that would be fatal. He had also to bear in mind that he was a poor printer of twenty-three, just started in business; that he was discoursing of high matters and great personages; and that this New York dispute had a peculiar bearing upon the politics of Pennsylvania. Of all these things the young editor was mindful; and he produced an article that brought over to the support of his *Gazette* a large number of the most influential persons in the province.

He was no less wise upon that most difficult and dangerous of all subjects—religion. Generally avoiding the topic altogether, he occasionally selected an article which treated religion itself with respect, but gave no support to the exclusive claims of some of the sects. The following are sentences from an article in Number Eighty-two:—"Religion has three great adversaries, Atheism, Superstition, and Enthusiasm: The first may be shown to be Nonsense, the second Folly, and the third Madness. . . . I shall begin with Superstition and Enthusiasm; because as they are generally confounded with Religion, they give it a vast Disadvantage, when it is at any Time compared with Atheism, or Irreligion (its proper Opposite) by discolouring it with all the Absurdities which belong only to them. But Superstition being the more prevailing Extravagance of the two, I shall first take that Folly to task, and inquire into its principal Causes and Effects. . . . I dismiss my

Reader with this summary Remark upon what has been said : That as the Christian Religion is the Best of all Religions, so Christian Superstition, which is the Corruption of it, is the Worst of all Superstitions."

The people of Philadelphia approved of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, as conducted by its new proprietors. When but three numbers had appeared under their auspices, they announced that they had met with sufficient encouragement to induce them to continue the paper, and to increase their facilities for obtaining news :—"We shall from time to time have all the noted Publick Prints from Great Britain, New England, New York, Maryland, and Jamaica, besides what News may be collected from private Letters and Informations ; and we doubt not of continuing to give our Customers all the Satisfaction they expect from a Performance of this Nature."

Nevertheless, their business was still upon a very small scale. Franklin and Meredith were still poor printers, doing all their work themselves, having not even a boy to assist them. Nay, the greater part of the work was done by Franklin's own hands, for Meredith, besides being a poor workman, had fallen into habits of drinking, and was seldom sober.

A debt that ought not to have been incurred, or that ought to have been paid long ago, is apt to be at last presented for payment at the most inconvenient of all possible moments. A gentle reminder from Mr Vernon reached our young friend, just when he was straining every nerve and devoting every penny to strengthen his still uncertain business. He wrote to his creditor, frankly confessing his fault, and asking a little longer forbearance. His request was freely granted, and before many months more had elapsed,

he had the delight of paying both principal and interest of a debt that had weighed heavily upon his conscience for more than seven years.

The new firm contrived very soon to get a share of the public printing, previously done by Bradford. Bradford printed the Governor's Address this year so inelegantly and incorrectly, that Franklin, quick to seize an opportunity, struck off an edition, executed in his best manner, and sent a copy to each member of the Assembly, who then numbered about thirty. The difference between the two versions was noted and remembered. Andrew Hamilton, whom Franklin had served in London, was then in the House, wherein Franklin had other zealous friends, to say nothing of those who wished to stand well with a young printer, who, to use that young printer's own words, "had learnt to scribble a little." The result was, that to Franklin and Meredith was assigned the printing for the Assembly for the next year. It was not great in amount, but it was a lift to beginners, gave them standing, and prepared the way for other and better public work. Before long, the new paper-money was to be printed. Franklin's friends in the House, urging his claims as author of the pamphlet, procured for him this profitable job, which was a great and timely help. "This was another advantage," he says, "gained by my being able to write."

But his footing in the world was still so far from being secure, that, after a severe struggle of two years, he seemed in danger of losing the little headway he had gained. Their materials had cost two hundred pounds, which sum the elder Meredith had agreed to advance. Owing to some misfortunes, he was able to raise but one-half of that sum, leaving a hundred pounds to be paid by a firm that could not spare from its business a hundred shillings. The

merchant, who had imported the articles, became impatient, sued all the parties concerned, and threatened the young printers with ruin. They obtained bail, which secured them a brief respite—but only a respite. How real the peril was, and how acutely Franklin felt it, we still discern in the fervour with which, after the lapse of forty happy years, he pours forth his gratitude to the friends who generously came to his rescue. “In this distress,” he says, “two true friends, whose kindness I have never forgotten, nor ever shall forget while I can remember anything, came to me separately, unknown to each other, and without any application from me, offered each of them to advance me all the money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself, if that should be practicable; but they did not like my continuing the partnership with Meredith, who, as they said, was often seen drunk in the street, playing at low games in alehouses, much to our discredit.”

These two friends were William Coleman and Robert Grace, members of the Junto, and extremely dear to Franklin as long as he lived. He told them he felt grateful to the Merediths for what they had done, and he could not propose a separation as long as there was any prospect of their fulfilling their agreement. If, however, they should finally fail to do so, the partnership would be dissolved of course, and then he should think himself at liberty to accept the proffered assistance. Soon after, Franklin said to his partner: “Perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me, what he would for you. If that is the case, tell me, and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business.”

To this Meredith replied: “No; my father has really

been disappointed, and is really unable ; and I am unwilling to distress him further. I see this is a business I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was folly in me to come to town, and put myself, at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I am inclined to go with them, and follow my old employment ; you may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the company upon you, return to my father the hundred pounds he has advanced, pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership and leave the whole in your hands."

Franklin accepted the proposal on the instant, borrowed a hundred pounds from each of his two generous friends, paid off both the Merediths, and went on with the business alone. The partnership was dissolved July 14th, 1730, but was not announced in the newspaper until May 11th, 1732, which was about the time when he had paid all his debts, and felt himself a free man.

From this time his progress was uninterrupted, though not yet rapid. His powerful patron, Andrew Hamilton, procured for him, soon after, the printing of the paper-money and laws of Delaware, which he retained as long as he continued in business. He also opened a small stationer's shop. He now engaged a journeyman, one whom he had known in London, and an apprentice. At this period he says he not only *was* industrious, but took care to let his neighbours see that he was so. He dressed plainly, attended no places of public diversion, never went fishing or shooting ; and to show that he was not above his business, sometimes brought home the paper he had purchased through

the streets in a wheelbarrow. His credit constantly improved, and his business steadily increased.

Nevertheless, he did not yet feel himself quite safe. David Harry, formerly an apprentice of Keimer's, had bought the business of that unfortunate person on his removal to Barbadoes, and now threatened to become a powerful rival to Franklin. Harry had rich friends, who could influence a great amount of business. Franklin proposed a partnership to him, which the young gentleman rejected with scorn. Soon he, too, went the way of fools. He dressed and lived expensively, neglected his business, got into debt, lost his customers, and at last was obliged to follow his old master to Barbadoes. The coast was then clear for Franklin, Andrew Bradford being old, rich, careless, and in no way formidable. Bradford, however, had one great advantage in being postmaster, since the postmaster had it in his power to prevent the post-riders from carrying all newspapers but his own. Franklin did, indeed, both send and receive newspapers by the post, but it was only by bribing the riders; and the public, not being aware of the fact, long supposed that Bradford's *Mercury* was a better sheet for advertising than Franklin's *Gazette*, and gave their patronage accordingly. Bradford's conduct in forbidding the riders to carry the *Gazette* excited the disgust of Franklin. "I thought so meanly of the practice," he says, "that when I afterwards came into his situation, I took care never to imitate it."



CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE, FOUNDATION OF SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY, AND
"POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC."



FRANKLIN seeing his way clear to the gradual formation of a safe and profitable business, it was natural his thoughts should be turned to marriage. It must be confessed that Franklin's relation of the events which led to his marriage is very discreditable; and we approach the subject with considerable diffidence.

Mrs Godfrey, with whom he still boarded, projected a match for him with a Miss Godfrey, the daughter of one of her relations.

"She took opportunities," says Franklin, "of bringing us often together, till a serious courtship on my part ensued, the girl being in herself very deserving. The old folks encouraged me by continual invitations to supper, and by leaving us together, till at length it was time to explain. Mrs Godfrey managed our little treaty. I let her know that I expected as much money with their daughter as would pay off my remaining debt for the printing-house, which I believe was not then above a hundred pounds. She brought me word they had no such sum to spare: I said they might mortgage their house in the loan office. The answer to this after some days was, that they did not approve the match; that, on inquiry of Bradford, they had been informed the

printing business was not a profitable one ; the types would soon be worn out, and more wanted ; that Keimer and David Harry had failed one after the other, and I should probably soon follow them ; and, therefore, I was forbidden the house, and the daughter shut up. Whether this was a real change of sentiment, or only artifice on a supposition of our being too far engaged in affection to retract, and therefore that we should steal a marriage, which would leave them at liberty to give or withhold what they pleased, I know not. But I suspected the motive, resented it, and went no more. Mrs Godfrey brought me afterward some more favourable accounts of their disposition, and would have drawn me on again ; but I declared absolutely my resolution to have nothing more to do with that family. This was resented by the Godfreys ; we differed, and they removed, leaving me the whole house, and I resolved to take no more inmates."

Cool, for a swain of twenty-four. We must fall back upon the indisputable fact, however, that all marriages, at that day, partook of the nature of a business compact. It does not appear that marriages were less happy because the excessive prudence of parents was permitted to check the excessive ardour of youth. Frugality and industry were the only ways to wealth known to our forefathers ; and a man did well who, by the exercise of those virtues during a long life, gained a decent provision for his old age. A hundred pounds was a hundred pounds when poor Richard went courting. It actually represented a thousand acts of self-denial, and placed the man who had it a very long way in advance of one who had it not. We must read Franklin's account of his courtship, as well as the prudential maxims of poor Richard, by "the light of other days."

Deborah Read, meanwhile, was dejected and solitary. It was believed, but was not known, that the runaway potter whom she had married, had had a wife living at the time. It was rumoured, but not ascertained, that the potter had since died in the West Indies. Franklin was still intimate in the family, who often consulted him upon their affairs. He lamented the lady's unhappy state, and attributed it to his own "giddiness and inconstancy when in London." The mother, however, blamed herself, because she had urged on the unfortunate marriage in the absence of Franklin, who, if he had found the young lady unmarried on his return from London, would doubtless have renewed his suit. Pitying her forlorn condition, and reproaching himself as its cause, his fondness for her revived; and, at length, he proposed that they should risk the possible consequences of marriage; and accordingly, on September 1st, 1730, Benjamin Franklin and Deborah Read were married.

Rogers, the potter, never appeared to disturb their tranquillity, for he was really dead; nor was Franklin ever sued for his numerous debts, as he had feared he might be.

Mrs Franklin was an industrious, thrifty, capable, kind woman. She attended her husband's little shop, bought the rags for the new paper-mill, stitched pamphlets, folded newspapers, taught her husband to be economical, and proved herself, in all ways, a generous and faithful helpmeet. Long afterwards, he wrote to her, when far away: "It was a comfort to me to recollect that I had once been clothed from head to foot in woollen and linen of my wife's manufacture, and that I never was prouder of any dress in my life. She was a cheerful, tolerant soul, freely allowing for the foibles and faults of human nature. A remark of hers which Franklin quotes in one of his letters, about people who

are punctilious and exacting in trifles, does her much honour: "If people can be pleased with small matters, it is a pity but they should have them." To say that she was an illiterate woman, is only to say that she lived in the last century. Her letters are as full of bad spelling as they are of homely sense and loving-kindness. She was a finely-formed, handsome woman, with a fair and pleasant countenance. Her children and even her grandchildren were celebrated for their beauty throughout the colonies.

And let us say of him that, though he had not been an ardent lover, like the lovers we like to read of in fiction, he was a faithful, tender, and considerate husband; of whom his wife was proud, and with whom she was happy. "We throve together," says Franklin, "and ever endeavoured to make each other happy." It were well if all lovers of the ardent description could say the same after a married life of forty years. Their home, at first, was plain and frugal in the extreme. "We kept no idle servants," says Franklin, "our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was for a long time bread and milk, (no tea,) and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon; but mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress in spite of principle. Being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a china bowl, with a spoon of silver. They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings; for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserved a silver spoon and china bowl as well as any of his neighbours. This was the first appearance of plate and china in our house, which afterward, in a

course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value."

It was but a few months after his marriage, while still living in this lowly and frugal manner,—still wearing his leather apron, still wheeling home his purchases of stationery, still making his lampblack and mixing his ink, still battling with the difficulties attending the establishment of a new business,—that he set on foot the measures which resulted in the founding of what may be truly styled the most useful library that ever existed.

When the Junto was first formed, its meetings were held in an alehouse. But the members soon removed to a room of their own, lent them by Robert Grace, one of the Junto. It often happened that a member would bring a book or two to the club, for the purpose of illustrating the subject of debate, and this led Franklin to propose that all the members should keep their books in the Junto-room, as well for reference while debating as for the use of members during the week. The suggestion being approved, one end of their little apartment was soon filled with books, and there they remained for the common benefit. At the expiry of a year, however, some books having been injured, their owners became dissatisfied, and the books were all taken home. Books were then scarce, high-priced, and of great bulk. As a general rule, the middle classes of Philadelphia, to which Franklin belonged, did not possess or care to possess books to any extent, and the members of the Junto, once having felt the benefits of the temporary co-operation, felt the want of it greatly on the removal of the books to the houses of their respective owners.

At this juncture Franklin conceived the idea of a subscription library. Early in 1731 he drew up a plan, the sub-

stance of which was, that each subscriber should contribute two pounds sterling for the first purchase of books, and ten shillings a year for the increase of the library. As few of the inhabitants of Philadelphia had money to spare, and still fewer cared for reading, he found very great difficulty in procuring a sufficient number of subscribers. He says: "I put myself as much as I could out of sight, and stated it as a scheme of a *number of friends*, who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought lovers of reading. In this way my affairs went on more smoothly, and I ever after practised it on such occasions, and from my frequent successes can heartily recommend it." Yet it was not until November 1731, at least five months after the project was started, that fifty names were obtained; and not till March 1732 that the money was collected. After consulting James Logan, "the best judge of books in these parts," the first list of books was made out, a draft upon London of forty-five pounds was purchased, and both were placed in the hands of one of the directors who was going to England. Peter Collinson undertook the purchase, and added to it presents of Newton's "*Principia*," and "*Gardener's Dictionary*." All the business of the library Mr Collinson continued to transact for thirty years, and always swelled the annual parcel of books by gifts of valuable works. In those days getting a parcel from London was a tedious affair indeed. All the summer of 1732 the subscribers were waiting for the coming of the books, as for an event of the greatest interest. Among Franklin's Junto memoranda at this time the following sentence occurs, which was probably presented to the Junto as a resolution: "When the books of the library come, every member shall undertake

some author, that he may not be without observations to communicate."

In October the books arrived, and were placed, at first, in the room of the Junto. A librarian was appointed, and the library was opened once a week for giving out the books. The second year Franklin himself served as librarian. For many years the secretary to the directors was Joseph Breintnal, by whose zeal and diligence the interests of the library were greatly promoted. Franklin printed a catalogue soon after the arrival of the books, for which, and for other printing, he was exempted from paying his annual ten shillings for two years.

The success of this library, thus begun by a few mechanics and clerks, was great in every sense of the word. Valuable donations of books, money, and curiosities were frequently made to it. The number of subscribers slowly, but steadily, increased. Libraries of similar character sprung up all over the country, and many were started even in Philadelphia. Peter Kalm, a Swedish traveller, who was in Philadelphia in 1748, says that then the parent library had given rise to "many little libraries," on the same plan as itself. He also says that non-subscribers were then allowed to take books out of the library, by leaving a pledge for the value of the book, and paying for a folio eightpence a week, for a quarto sixpence, and for all others fourpence. "The subscribers," he says, "were so kind to me as to order the librarian, during my stay here, to lend me every book I should want, without requiring any payment of me." In 1764 the shares had risen in value to nearly twenty pounds, and the collection was considered to be worth seventeen hundred pounds. In 1785 the number of volumes was 5487; in 1807 14,457; in 1861, 70,000. The institution is one of the few

in America that has held on its way, unchanged in any essential principle, for a century and a quarter, always on the increase, always faithfully administered, always doing well its appointed work. There is every reason to believe that it will do so for centuries to come.

The prosperity of the Philadelphia library was owing to the original excellence of the plan, the good sense embodied in the rules, the care with which its affairs were conducted, and the vigilance of Franklin and his friends in turning to account passing events. Thomas Penn, for example, visited Philadelphia a year or two after the library was founded; when the directors of the library waited upon him with a dutiful address, and received, in return, a gift of books and apparatus. "Reading became fashionable," says Franklin, "and our people having no public amusements to divert their attention from study, became better acquainted with books, and, in a few years, were observed by strangers to be better instructed and more intelligent than people of the same rank generally are in other countries."

For the present we will leave the subject of Franklin's studies and exertions for the good of the town, in order to review his career as a man of business. Having shown how he earned his leisure, it will then be in order to tell how he employed it.

Franklin was an active business man in Philadelphia for just twenty years—from 1728 to 1748. He was a printer, editor, compiler, publisher, bookseller, bookbinder, and stationer. He made lampblack and ink; he dealt in rags; he sold soap and live-geese feathers. One of his advertisements of 1735 offers "very good sack at six shillings a gallon;" and he frequently announces that he has coffee for sale and other household articles. His shop was the

source of news, and the favourite haunt of the inquisitive and public-spirited. If there was a scheme on foot for a course of lectures, or any project to promote the public good, the subscription-papers were to be found "at the new printing-office near the market."

The *Pennsylvania Gazette* thrived apace. It was incomparably the best newspaper published in the colonies. At first, not more than one number in five contained an article of a literary character; but after a few months had elapsed, every number had something of the kind—a piece from the *Spectator*, an article from an English newspaper, or an essay by Franklin, which had first been read to the Junto. Franklin's own contributions have been collected, and are well known to be among the sprightliest of his efforts. His selections were of a liberal cast, well calculated to serve as a corrective of the colonial and sectarian spirit. The paper contained scarcely anything of a controversial nature, and nothing ill-humoured. In all the colonies there was no better preacher of good-will and brotherly love than the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

In December 1732 Franklin gave the Pennsylvanians the first number of that most renowned of all almanacs, *Poor Richard*. It was a great success.

Poor Richard was the *comic* almanac of its day. Many serious maxims appear in it, but the comic element is the prevailing one. The reason why *Poor Richard's* economical maxims (an insignificant portion of its contents) acquired such celebrity, can be easily explained. In 1757 the taxes caused by the French war pressing heavily upon the colonists, Franklin wrote a long article for the preface of his almanac, the object of which was to show that the taxes could easily be paid, if the people would only be a little

less extravagant. Beginning with the remark, that nothing pleases an author more than to hear himself quoted, *Poor Richard* thus proceeds: "I stopped my horse lately where a great number of people were collected at an auction of merchants' goods. The hour of the sale not being come, they were conversing on the badness of the times; and one of the company called to a plain, clean old man, with white locks, 'Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the times? Will not these heavy taxes quite ruin the country? How shall we ever be able to pay them? What would you advise us to do?' Father Abraham stood up and replied, 'If you would have my advice, I will give it you in short; for *A word to the wise is enough*, as *Poor Richard* says.' They joined in desiring him to speak his mind; and, gathering round him, he proceeded as follows."

The old man then goes on to quote, one after another, with connecting remarks, all the prudential and economical maxims that *Poor Richard* had published in twenty-five years. The "clean old man" harangued the crowd at great length, and displayed much ingenuity in stringing the quaint proverbs smoothly together. "The people heard it," says *Poor Richard*, "and approved the doctrine; and immediately practised the contrary, just as if it had been a common sermon; for the auction opened, and they began to buy extravagantly."

This amusing preface made a brilliant hit. Besides being immediately copied into all the colonial newspapers, it was reprinted in England on a large sheet, designed to be hung up in cottages; it was translated into nearly every modern language, and circulated in immense numbers, with great success.

Poor Richard was emphatically a humorous almanac. The

advertisements which announced its publication were humorous ; most of the prefaces were humorous ; the accounts of the eclipses and other natural phenomena were generally humorous ; the greater part of the verses and proverbs were humorous ; and those which were not humorous were quaint.

Some of the best fun Franklin ever wrote occurs in the prefaces to *Poor Richard*. Mr Richard Saunders (*Poor Richard*) begins his first preface by avowing that his motive in publishing an almanac is not at all a disinterested one. "The plain truth of the matter is," said *Richard*, "I am excessive poor, and my wife, good woman, is, I tell her, excessive proud ; she cannot bear, she says, to sit spinning in her shift of tow, while I do nothing but gaze at the stars, and has threatened more than once to burn all my books and rattling-traps, (as she calls my instruments,) if I do not make some profitable use of them for the good of my family. The printer has offered me some considerable share of the profits, and I have thus begun to comply with my dame's desire." Long ago, he continues, he would have given the world an almanac, but for the fear of injuring his friend and fellow-student, Titan Leeds.* "But this obstacle (I am far from speaking it with pleasure) is soon to be removed, since inexorable death, who was never known to respect merit, has already prepared the mortal dart, the fatal sister has already extended her destroying shears, and that ingenious man must soon be taken from us. He dies, by my calculation, made at his request, on October 17, 1733, 3 ho. 29 m. P.M., at the very instant of the ☿ of ☉ and ♀. By his own calculation, he will survive till the 26th of the same month. This small difference between us,

* At that time the publisher of an almanac in Philadelphia, originally established by Keimer.

we have disputed whenever we have met these nine years past; but at length he is inclined to agree with my judgment. Which of us is most exact, a little time will now determine. As, therefore, these provinces may not longer expect to see any of his performances after this year, I think myself free to take up the task."

The next year he joyfully acknowledged the success of his almanac, through which his wife had been able to buy a pot of her own, instead of being obliged to borrow one; and they had got something to put into it. "She has also got a pair of shoes, two new shifts, and a new warm petticoat; and for my part, I have bought a second-hand coat, so good that I am not now ashamed to go to town or be seen there. These things have rendered her temper so much more pacific than it used to be, that I may say, I have slept more, and more quietly, within this last year, than in the three foregoing years put together." Returning to Titan Leeds, he says, he cannot positively say whether he is dead or alive, since he was unable to be present at the closing scene. "The stars," he observes, "only show to the skilful what will happen in the natural and universal chain of causes and effects; but it is well known that the events which would otherwise certainly happen, at certain times, in the course of nature, are sometimes set aside or postponed, for wise and good reasons, by the immediate particular dispositions of Providence; which particular dispositions the stars can by no means discover or foreshow. There is, however, (and I cannot speak it without sorrow,) —there is the strongest probability that my dear friend is no more; for there appears in his name, as I am assured, an almanac for the year 1734, in which I am treated in a very gross and unhandsome manner; in which I am called

a false predictor, an ignorant, a conceited scribbler, a fool, and a liar. Mr Leeds was too well bred to use any man so indecently and so scurrilously, and, moreover, his esteem and affection for me was extraordinary; so that it is to be feared that pamphlet may be only a contrivance of somebody or other, who hopes, perhaps, to sell two or three years' almanacs still, by the sole force and virtue of Mr Leeds's name."

In next year's preface, the fooling is still more exquisite: "Having received much abuse from Titan Leeds deceased, (Titan Leeds, when living, would not have used me so :) I say, having received much abuse from the ghost of Titan Leeds, who pretends to be still living, and to write almanacs in spite of me and my predictions, I cannot help saying, that though I take it patiently, I take it very unkindly. And whatever he may pretend, it is undoubtedly true that he is really defunct and dead. First, because the stars are seldom disappointed,—never but in the case of wise men, *sapiens dominabitur astris*,—and they foreshowed his death at the time I predicted it. Secondly, it was requisite and necessary he should die punctually at that time for the honour of astrology, the art professed both by him and his father before him. Thirdly, it is plain to every one that reads his two last almanacs (for 1734 and 1735) that they are not written with that life his performances used to be written with,—the wit is low and flat; the little hints dull and spiritless; nothing smart in them but Hudibras's verses against astrology at the heads of the months in the last, which no astrologer but a *dead one* would have inserted, and no man *living* would or could write such stuff as the rest."

Titan Leeds retorted by saying that there was not, and never had been, such a person as Richard Saunders, to

which, next year, Franklin humorously replied. One preface purported to be written by Bridget Saunders, the wife of *Poor Richard*, and another contained a long letter from the departed spirit of Titan Leeds, assuring his old friend that he *did* die at the time predicted by him.

From the numbers of *Poor Richard* that are accessible, we select, as specimens of its proverbial philosophy, the following:—

"Love well, whip well." "The proof of gold is fire ; the proof of a woman, gold ; the proof of man, a woman." "There is no little enemy." "A new truth is a truth ; an old error is an error." "Drink water ; put the money in your pocket ; and leave the dry belly-ache in the punch-bowl." "Necessity never made a good bargain." "Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead." "Deny self for self's sake." "Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee." "Here comes the orator with his flood of words, and his drop of reason." "Sal laughs at everything you say ; why ? because she has fine teeth." "An old young man will be a young old man." "He is no clown that drives the plough, but he that does clownish things." "Forewarned, forearmed." "Fish and visitors smell in three days." "Diligence is the mother of good luck." "Wealth is not his that has it, but his that enjoys it." "Let thy maid-servant be faithful, strong, and homely." "He that can have patience can have what he will." "Don't throw stones at your neighbour's, if your own windows are glass." "Good wives and good plantations are made by good husbands." "God heals, the doctor takes the fee." "The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?" "There are three faithful friends, an old wife, an old dog, and ready money." "Who has deceived thee so oft as thyself?" "Fly pleasures and

they'll follow you." "Hast thou virtue? acquire also the graces and beauties of virtue." "He that would have a short Lent, let him borrow money to be repaid at Easter." "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage; half shut afterwards." "As we must account for every idle word, so we must for every idle silence." "Search others for their virtues, thyself for thy vices." "Grace thou thy house, and let not that grace thee." "Let thy child's first lesson be obedience, and the second will be what thou wilt." "Let thy discontents be thy secrets." "Industry need not wish." "Happy that nation, fortunate that age, whose history is not diverting." "To bear other people's afflictions, every one has courage enough and to spare." "There are lazy minds as well as lazy bodies." "Tricks and treachery are the practice of fools, that have not wit enough to be honest." "Let no pleasure tempt thee, no profit allure thee, no ambition corrupt thee, no example sway thee, no persuasion move thee, to do anything which thou knowest to be evil; so shalt thou always live jollily, for a good conscience is a continual Christmas." ~~XX~~

These wise saws, selected from a dozen numbers of *Poor Richard*, give, I think, a fair idea of the general spirit of this part of their contents. A few of the maxims are taken from Lord Bacon's essays, some from Rochefoucauld, and many from other writers, but upon most, Franklin put his stamp before inserting them. A large part of the contents of *Poor Richard* is rhyme, and rhyme of very poor quality. The following specimens are much above the average:—

"Altho' thy teacher act not as he preaches,
 Yet ne'ertheless, if good, do what he teaches;
 Good counsel, failing men may give, for why?
 He that 's aground knows where the shoal doth lie.

My old friend Berryman oft, when alive,
Taught others thrift, himself could never thrive.
Thus like the whetstone, many men are wont
To sharpen others while themselves are blunt."

POETRY FOR DECEMBER 1733.

"She that will eat her breakfast in her bed,
And spend the morn in dressing of her head,
And sit at dinner like a maiden bride,
And talk of nothing all day but of pride ;
God in His mercy may do much to save her,
But, what a case is he in that shall have her."

POETRY FOR DECEMBER 1734.

BY MRS BRIDGET SAUNDERS, MY DUCHESS, IN ANSWER TO
THE DECEMBER VERSES OF LAST YEAR.

"He that for the sake of drink neglects his trade,
And spends each night in taverns till 'tis late,
And rises when the sun is four hours high,
And ne'er regards his starving family ;
God in His mercy may do much to save him,
But, woe to the poor wife whose lot it is to have him."

The great sale of the first number of *Poor Richard* placed at the command of the printer thereof a little superfluous capital, which he invested wisely. One of his journeymen he sent to Charleston, where there was no printer, and furnished him with a press and type, on condition of receiving one-third of the profits of the business. The scheme succeeded, and he afterwards promoted many of his best workmen in the same manner. "Most of them," he remarks, "did well, being enabled at the end of our term (six years) to purchase the types of me, and go on working for themselves, by which means several families were raised. Partnerships often finish in quarrels ; but I was happy in this, that mine were all carried on and ended amicably ; owing

I think, a good deal to the precaution of having very explicitly settled in our articles everything to be done by, or expected from, each partner, so that there was nothing to dispute, which precaution I would therefore recommend to all who enter into partnership."

Poor Richard, too, enabled him, in this year, 1733, to revisit his native Boston, after an absence of nearly ten years. To the end of his life he visited Boston every ten years, except when prevented by war, absence from the country, or sickness. On his return from Boston, he stopped at Newport, where lived his brother James, from whom he had parted on ill terms. All past differences were forgotten, and they passed some time together with the utmost cordiality. James Franklin, who was in declining health, asked his brother to take home with him to Philadelphia, and bring up to the printing business, his son, then ten years of age, in case the boy should be left fatherless. Franklin promised to do so, and kept his promise. He sent the boy to school, taught him his trade, and sent him home to his mother, who had carried on the business at Newport after her husband's death, with a new assortment of type. "Thus it was that I made my brother ample amends," says Franklin.

Returning to Philadelphia, he prosecuted his affairs with renewed energy. He began to import books from England, occasionally published a small work on his own account, and became the favourite printer for the clergy.

In 1741 he started a *Monthly Magazine*, one of the very few of his enterprises that did not succeed. It stopped at the sixth number. In 1744 he had the pleasure of publishing a translation of Cicero's "Essay upon Old Age," by his valued friend and patron, James Logan, which

was reprinted three times in Great Britain, and highly praised by English critics. In the same year he reprinted the celebrated novel of the last century, "Pamela, or Virtue rewarded," a six-shilling book. "Bolingbroke's Idea of a Patriot King" was another of his reprints, an amazingly popular tract in its day. Nevertheless, as long as he remained in business, the vast majority of his publications were ephemeral pamphlets on points of doctrine, books of devotion, and sermons preached on special occasions by favourite clergymen. He imported from England, however, every important work that appeared, even the most expensive.

In the course of time he established a German printing-office. Many of the smaller publications of that day were published in both languages, and were advertised in both. There were then extensive districts in Pennsylvania where the German was the only language spoken.

That Franklin had grown in the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens, is shown by many trifling incidents of this part of his life. He was one of those men who are often selected as arbitrators, and whose advice is asked. "Friend Franklin," said a noted Quaker lawyer of Philadelphia, "thou knowest everything. Canst thou tell me how I am to preserve my small beer in the back yard? My neighbours, I find, are tapping it for me." Franklin's reply was, "Put a barrel of old Madeira by the side of it." A man who frequently makes replies of that kind, need not have Franklin's merit to be admired in a country town.

Nevertheless, in 1736, when he had been several years in business, and had given proof upon proof that he had the best head in Pennsylvania, he was thought worthy to serve the public in no higher capacity than clerk to the General Assembly, the legislature of the colony, an office of little

emolument and no great honour. The place, however, was advantageous to him, as it secured to him the public printing. The first year, he tells us, he was elected unanimously, but the second, his election was opposed by an influential member who had another candidate in view. Franklin, notwithstanding, was again chosen.


Franklin held the post of clerk to the Assembly for more than fourteen years. The year after his first election, he was appointed postmaster of Philadelphia, an office that was valuable to him only as affording better facilities for procuring news and distributing his *Gazette*. These two offices gave him advantages over all other printers and editors. Thenceforward, he had nothing to do but hold on the even tenor of his way, and wisely use what he easily gained.

We turn now to his inner life during these busy years, a topic far more interesting.



CHAPTER X

SELF-EDUCATION CONTINUED.

RANKLIN read the books of the new library assiduously. He appears to have perused the historical works first ; for we have an early paper of his, entitled "Observations on my reading history in the Library." Some of these observations are such as might have been expected from a philosophic diplomatist of fifty years' standing in European courts, not from a young printer in a young colony. They were to the following effect :—

"That the great affairs of the world, the wars, revolutions, &c., are carried on and effected by parties. That the view of these parties is their general present interest, or what they take to be such. That the different views of these different parties occasion all confusion. That while a party is carrying on a general design, each man has his particular private interest in view. That, as soon as a party has gained its general point, each member becomes intent upon his particular interest, which, thwarting others, breaks that party into divisions, and occasions more confusion. That few in public affairs act from a mere view of the good of their country, whatever they may pretend ; and though their actings bring real good to their country, yet men primarily considered that their own and their country's interest were

united, and so did not act from a principle of benevolence. That fewer still, in public affairs, act with a view to the good of mankind. There seems to me at present to be great occasion for raising a *United Party for Virtue*, by forming the virtuous and good men of all nations into a regular body, to be governed by suitable good and wise rules, which good and wise men may probably be more unanimous in their obedience to than common people are to common laws. I at present think, that whoever attempts this aright, and is well qualified, cannot fail of pleasing God and of meeting with success."

This curious production, signed with the initials of the author, lay among his papers many years, and bore no fruit. He tells us, however, that he thought much upon his project of uniting the virtuous, drew up a creed for the members of the proposed Order, and communicated the scheme to one or two friends, who evidently approved of it. The name of the organisation was to have been the "Society of the Free and Easy:" that is, as he himself explains, *Free* from the dominion of vice and debt, and consequently *Easy* in mind and circumstances. While he was revolving this scheme, half formed, in his mind, certain experiences of his own quickened his interest in it, and suggested some important details. He conceived the project of becoming himself morally perfect. "I wished," he explains, "to live without committing any fault at any time, and to conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not *always* do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined: while my attention was taken up, and care employed in

guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another ; habit took the advantage of inattention ; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason." He therefore resolved to attend to one of the virtues at a time, and having made a little progress in that, to proceed to another. His list of virtues was the following :—Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquillity, Chastity, Humility. He made a little book, in which he allotted to each of these virtues one page, so ruled with red and black ink as that he could easily record his daily delinquencies. Thus provided, he gave one week's particular attention to each virtue : and as his virtues were thirteen in number, he was able to go through his book four times a year.

The success of this singular plan was at first not very flattering. "I was surprised," he says, "to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined ; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the trouble of renewing now and then my little book, which, by scraping out the marks on the paper of old faults to make room for new ones in a new course, became full of holes, I transferred my tables and precepts to the ivory leaves of a memorandum book, on which the lines were drawn with red ink, that made a durable stain ; and on those lines I marked my faults with a black lead pencil ; which marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge. After a while I went through one course only in a year ; and afterward only one in several years ; till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered ; but I always carried my little book with me."

Two of the virtues, he adds, he never could acquire :

Order and Humility. The *appearance* of humility, he says, he contrived to attain, but not the reality of it ; so inveterate is pride in the heart of man, that if he had acquired this virtue he should doubtless have been proud of his humility. To promote habits of order, he drew up a scheme of the day, and endeavoured to conduct his life in accordance therewith. He rose at five, washed himself, and said his prayers. Then he laid out the business of the day, and thought of the particular virtue of that week. Then he studied an hour and a half, which brought him to breakfast-time. From eight to twelve, work ; then dinner and rest till one. From one to six, work again. From six to ten, supper, music, company, diversion, self-examination. At ten, to bed. This scheme he could practise without much interruption, but he never quite learned to have a place for everything, and to put everything in its place.

The reader may be inclined to smile at some of these details. It nevertheless remains true, that no one has ever acquired uncommon virtue without having made the acquirement of virtue an object of specific and systematic exertion. Whatever else comes to us by nature, self-control does not ; it has to be acquired. Franklin's method was the method suited to him in his time, circumstances, and sphere. If the ingenious reader knows a better, let him rejoice, and practise it. Franklin declares, in serious and earnest sentences written in his seventy-ninth year, that his plan was beneficial to him in the highest degree. These are his words : " It may be well my posterity should be informed, that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life down to the seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend

the remainder is in the hand of Providence ; but if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To *temperance* he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution. To *industry and frugality*, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned. To *sincerity and justice*, the confidence of his country, and the honourable employs it conferred upon him ; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper and that cheerfulness in conversation which make his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his young acquaintance."

Learning thus how difficult it is to become virtuous, he designed to make it one of the rules of the society of the Free and Easy, that candidates for initiation should be first exercised in his system of self-examination for, at least, one course of thirteen weeks. But the society was never formed. Increasing business and public offices absorbed his time until it was too late to attempt it. Late in life, however, he expressed his conviction that the scheme was a practicable one.

In 1733, Franklin began the study of languages, and soon learned to read French, Italian, and Spanish. His progress in Italian was promoted by his love of the game of chess. A friend, who was also learning the Italian, often lured him from his books by challenging him to play at this game. At length, he refused to play any more, except upon condition the victor should impose a task upon the vanquished, such

as learning a verb or writing a translation, which task should be performed before the next meeting. As they played about equally, they beat one another into the acquisition of the Italian language.

Having become tolerably proficient in French, Italian, and Spanish, he was led by an accident to undertake the Latin. His experience with this language is worthy the most serious consideration of all persons who are interested in teaching languages, or who contemplate learning them. Looking over a Latin Testament one day, he was surprised to find that his knowledge of the three modern languages, together with his dim recollection of his year's study of Latin at the Boston Grammar-school, enabled him to read the Latin Testament with considerable facility. Encouraged by this, he resumed the study of Latin, a language he had always been fond of quoting. If we may judge from the long quotations from various authors in his writings of this period, we must conclude that he read a good deal of Latin.

Music is mentioned by Franklin as a diversion, but he pursued it with more than the devotion of an ordinary amateur. He appears to have played on several instruments, and to have studied their nature and powers. He was also a constant observer of nature. Ordinary household events suggested to his fertile mind magnificent conceptions. The acquirement of other knowledge may have assumed something of the nature of a task, but not so his researches in science ; these were the irresistible bent of his mind. He was, as before remarked, a genuine son of the earth. He lived close to nature. He would be bathing in the river, an hour or two at a time, nearly every evening for

several weeks of the summer. When in closest contact with natural objects he seemed most at home ; and it is to such lovers of nature that nature loves to disclose her secrets.

There is something infinitely pleasing in the homeliness of some of Franklin's first observations in science. Professor Kalm, who was sent out by the Swedish Government to botanise in America, was much with Franklin in 1748, and has left some slight record of their conversations.

"Mr Franklin," wrote the learned Swede, "was inclined to believe that these little insects (ants) could by some means communicate their thoughts to each other, and he confirmed his opinion by some examples. When an ant finds some sugar, it runs immediately under ground to its hole, where having stayed a little while, a whole army comes out, unites, and marches to the place where the sugar is, and carries it off by pieces ; or, if an ant meets with a dead fly, which it cannot carry alone, it immediately hastens home, and soon after, more come out, creep to the fly, and carry it away. Sometime ago Mr Franklin put a little earthen-pot with treacle into a closet. A number of ants got into the pot and devoured the treacle very quietly. But when he observed it he shook them out, and tied the pot with a thin string to a nail in the ceiling, so that the pot hung down by the string. A single ant by chance remained in the pot, and this ant ate till it was satisfied. But when it wanted to get off, it was under great concern to find its way out ; it ran about the bottom of the pot in vain ; but at last, it found, after many attempts, the way to get to the ceiling by the string. After it had reached the ceiling, it ran to the wall, and from thence to the ground. It had hardly been away

for half an hour when a great swarm of ants came out, got up to the ceiling, and crept along the string into the pot, and began to eat again. This they continued till the treacle was all eaten; in the meantime one swarm running down the string and the other up.”*

We find Franklin, on another occasion, contriving a little tin windmill in a hole of his kitchen wall, for the purpose of turning a jack-machine for roasting meat. In making this windmill he not merely displayed mechanical ingenuity, but drew from its operation important inferences respecting the resistance of the air, and the arrangement of the sails of ships.

In 1743, one of those happy accidents which occur to observant men led Franklin to his famous discovery respecting the course of storms. *Poor Richard* having announced that, on a certain evening at nine o'clock, an eclipse of the moon would occur, Franklin intended to observe it. But before the time arrived, a violent north-east storm of wind and rain arose, which continued all the night and all the next day. It was a great and famous storm, which did much damage on sea and land, and was noticed in all the newspapers of the colonies. When Franklin received his Boston newspapers he was astonished to find in them, besides accounts of the storm, descriptions of the eclipse; which showed that in Boston the storm began after the eclipse was over. He wrote to his brother in Boston, who replied, that the eclipse was over, there, one hour before the storm begun. On pursuing his inquiries, he made the surprising discovery, that all those fierce north-east storms that swept our Atlantic coast move backward, *i.e.*, from south-west to north-east, and

* Kalm's Travels in America, vol. i. p. 303.

diminish in violence as they go. Franklin's conjectural explanation of this fact is very ingenious:—

“Suppose a great tract of country, land and sea,—to wit, Florida and the Bay of Mexico,—to have clear weather for several days, and to be heated by the sun, and its air thereby exceedingly rarefied. Suppose the country north-eastward, as Pennsylvania, New England, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, to be at the same time covered with clouds, and its air chilled and condensed. The rarefied air being lighter must rise, and the denser air next to it will press into its place; that will be followed by the next denser air; that by the next, and so on. Thus, when I have a fire in my chimney, there is a current of air constantly flowing from the door to the chimney; but the beginning of the motion was at the chimney, where the air being rarefied by the fire rising, its place was supplied by the cooler air that was next to it, and the place of that by the next, and so on to the door. So the water in a long sluice or mill-race, being stopped by a gate, is at rest like the air in a calm; but as soon as you open the gate at one end to let it out, the water which is next the gate begins first to move, that which is next to it follows; and so, though the water proceeds forward to the gate, the motion which began there runs backward, if one may so speak, to the upper end of the race, where the water is last in motion.”

About the same time, he invented the Franklin stove, which warmed one generation of colonial Americans, and another generation of American citizens, before it was superseded by improvements. In many country nooks the Franklin stove is still used, particularly in the South; and many of us can still remember its cheerful fire. It was

the wastefulness of the old fire-places, the growing scarcity of wood, and the time-honoured nuisance of smoking chimneys, that set Franklin at work upon this simple invention. Coal then was not known to exist in the colonies, and wood was fast receding from the large towns. To promote the introduction of his stoves, the inventor wrote an extensive and very ingenious pamphlet, in which he expounded the entire philosophy of house-warming, and explained the working of the new apparatus. Franklin, however, had not the least pecuniary interest in the invention, and never derived profit from it. "I made a present of the model," he says, "to Mr Robert Grace, one of my early friends, who, having an iron furnace, found the casting of the plates for these stoves a profitable thing, as they were growing in demand."

Thus the members of the Junto played into each other's hands and pockets. The Governor of Pennsylvania, Franklin adds, "was so pleased with the construction of this stove, that he offered to give me a patent for the sole vending of them for a term of years; but I declined it, from a principle which has ever weighed with me on such occasions, viz., that as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously."

The activity of Franklin's mind was shown in his trifling amusements. During the sessions of the Assembly he had to endure many dull hours, perched in his seat as clerk, listening to debates in which he could take no part. His friend Logan showed him one day a French book of "Magical Squares," an idle game of the last century. Franklin, who had made these squares in his youth, now beguiled the

tedium of the daily session by producing squares of extreme intricacy, surpassing all that had ever been done in that way. The following, for example, is one of his magical squares:—

52	61	4	13	20	29	36	45
14	3	62	51	46	35	30	19
53	60	5	12	21	28	37	44
11	6	59	54	43	38	27	22
55	58	7	10	23	26	39	42
9	8	57	56	41	40	25	24
50	63	2	15	18	31	34	47
16	1	64	49	48	33	32	17

This square, as explained by its contriver, contains astonishing properties: every straight row (horizontal or vertical) added together makes 260, and each half row half 260. The bent row of eight numbers ascending and descending diagonally, viz., from 16 ascending to 10, and from 23 descending to 17, and every one of its parallel bent rows of eight numbers, makes 260. Also, the bent row from 52 descending to 54, and from 43 ascending to 45, and every one of its parallel bent rows of eight numbers, makes 260. Also, the bent row from 45 to 43, descending to the left, and from 23 to 17, descending to the right, and every one of its parallel bent rows of eight numbers, makes 260. Also, the bent row from 52 to 54, descending to the

right, and from 10 to 16, descending to the left, and every one of its parallel bent rows of eight numbers, makes 260. Also, the parallel bent rows next to the above-mentioned, which are shortened to three numbers ascending and three descending, &c., as from 53 to 4 ascending, and from 29 to 44 descending, make, with the two corner numbers, 260. Also, the two numbers, 14, 61, ascending, and 36, 19, descending, with the lower four numbers situated like them, viz., 50, 1, descending, and 32, 47, ascending, make 260. And, lastly, the four corner numbers, with the four middle numbers, make 260.

But even these are not all the properties of this marvellous square. Its contriver declared that it has "five other curious ones," which he does not explain, but which the ingenious reader may discover if he can. Nor was this the most wonderful of Franklin's magical squares. He made one of 16 cells in each row, which, besides possessing the properties of the square given above, (the amount, however added, being always 2056,) had also this most remarkable peculiarity: a square hole being cut in a piece of paper of such a size as to take in and show through it just sixteen of the little squares, when laid on the greater square, the sum of the sixteen numbers, so appearing through the hole, wherever it was placed on the greater square, should likewise make 2056.

This square was executed in a single evening. It excited the boundless wonder of Mr Logan, to whom Franklin sent it, and who styled it a "most stupendous piece." Franklin himself jocularly said it was the "most" magically magical of any magic square ever made by any magician. Mr Logan alludes to these squares in one of his letters to Peter Collinson of London: "Our Benjamin Franklin is certainly

an extraordinary man, one of a singular good judgment, but of equal modesty. He is clerk of our Assembly, and there, for want of other employment, while he sat idle, he took it into his head to think of *magical squares*, in which he outdid Frenicle himself, who published above eighty pages in folio on that subject alone."

200	217	232	249	8	25	40	57	72	89	04	121	136	153	168	181
58	39	26	7	250	231	213	199	185	167	154	135	122	103	90	71
198	219	230	251	6	27	38	59	74	91	102	123	134	155	166	187
60	37	28	5	252	229	220	197	188	165	156	133	124	101	92	69
201	216	233	248	9	24	41	56	73	88	105	120	137	152	169	184
55	42	23	10	241	234	215	202	183	170	151	138	119	106	87	64
20	214	235	246	11	22	43	54	75	86	107	118	139	150	171	182
53	44	21	12	245	236	213	204	181	172	149	140	117	108	85	76
205	212	227	244	13	20	45	52	77	84	100	116	141	140	173	188
51	46	19	14	243	238	201	206	179	174	147	142	115	110	83	78
207	210	229	242	15	18	47	50	79	82	111	114	143	146	175	178
49	40	17	15	241	240	209	208	177	176	145	144	113	112	81	80
196	221	228	253	4	29	36	61	68	93	100	125	132	151	164	180
62	35	30	3	254	227	222	195	190	163	158	131	126	99	94	67
84	223	226	251	2	31	34	63	66	95	98	127	130	159	182	191
154	33	32	1	256	225	224	193	192	161	160	129	128	97	96	65

CHAPTER XI

THE PUBLIC-SPIRITED CITIZEN.



IT does a good man good to prosper in his business. It expands, cheers, softens, frees, and humbles him. Inherited wealth is a doubtful good. To convert it into a blessing requires in the recipient uncommon virtue and good sense: it generally proves too much for the weakness of human nature, and prevents a man from becoming a serviceable citizen. But the moderate, gradual, and safe prosperity which result from the skilful, thoughtful, and diligent prosecution of a legitimate business or trade, is a vast and lasting benefit, and bestows upon its possessor the means of noble gratifications.

Franklin continued to prosper. His *Gazette* became the leading newspaper of the district. *Poor Richard* continued to amuse the whole country, to the great profit of its printer, who was obliged to print it early in October in order to get a supply of copies to the remote colonies by the beginning of the new year.

As he throve in business, he grew in the esteem of his townsmen, and began to take the lead in their affairs. He tried first to reform the city watch, which was conducted on the ancient system, which Shakspeare burlesqued in the Dogberry scenes of "Much Ado about Nothing." Franklin's account of the old Philadelphia watch is valuable for

the light it throws upon those very scenes. "It was managed," he says, "by the constables of the respective wards in turn; the constable summoned a number of housekeepers to attend him for the night. Those who chose never to attend, paid him six shillings a year to be excused, which was supposed to go to hiring substitutes, but was in reality more than was necessary for that purpose, and made the constableness a place of profit; and the constable, for a little drink, often got such ragamuffins about him as a watch that respectable housekeepers did not choose to mix with. Walking the rounds, too, was often neglected, and most of the nights were spent in tippling."

To reform this absurd system, Franklin proceeded in his usual way,—first reading an article on the subject to the Junto, then communicating the plan of reform to the clubs in correspondence with the Junto, and finally treating the subject in the *Gazette*. It required several years of agitation to accomplish, but he was ultimately successful.

In the same way he founded the flourishing fire brigade of Philadelphia. By the Junto's aid, he now formed the Union Fire Company, the first of the kind in Philadelphia, of which he was himself a member for fifty years. Their first articles of agreement bound each member to keep in good order a certain number of leathern buckets, and strong baskets and bags for transporting goods, which were to be brought to every fire. In accordance with the social habits of that age, they agreed to spend an evening together once a month, and "communicate such ideas as occurred to them upon the subject of fires." In course of years the fines exacted for non-attendance provided the Union Fire Company with a complete apparatus of engines, hooks, and ladders.

In May 1743, he proposed the formation of an American Philosophical Society. He wrote a circular letter to his learned friends in Pennsylvania, New York, and other places, suggesting that they form themselves into a society, for the purpose of conversing and corresponding upon such subjects as the following:—“Newly discovered plants, herbs, trees, roots, their virtues, uses, methods of propagating them, and making such as are useful, but particular to some plantations, more general; improvements of vegetable juices, as ciders, wines; new methods of curing or preventing diseases; all new-discovered fossils in different countries, as mines, minerals, and quarries; new and useful improvements in any branch of mathematics; new discoveries in chemistry, such as improvements in distillation, brewing, and assaying of ores; new mechanical inventions for saving labour, as mills and carriages, and for raising and conveying of water, draining of meadows; all new arts, trades, and manufactures, that may be proposed or thought of; surveys, maps, and charts of particular parts of the sea-coasts or inland countries; course and junction of rivers and great roads, situation of lakes and mountains, nature of the soil and productions; new methods of improving the breed of useful animals; introducing other sorts from foreign countries; new improvements in planting, gardening, and clearing land; and all philosophical experiments that let light into the nature of things, tend to increase the power of man over matter, and multiply the conveniences or pleasures of life.”

He concluded his circular with these words:—“Benjamin Franklin, the writer of this Proposal, offers himself to serve the Society as their secretary, till they shall be provided with one more capable.”

The society was formed, and continued in existence for some years. Nevertheless, its success was neither great nor permanent, for, at that day, the circle of men capable of taking much interest in science was too limited for the proper support of such an organisation.

From 1740 to 1748 the whole of the European continent was engaged in warfare, and the inhabitants of the New England states, fearing that the ravages of war might, ere long, reach their own shores, made great efforts to raise forts, regiments, navies, and other means of defence. Until 1744 there was not much cause for alarm, but, from that time to the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, the colonies were under great apprehension, and vigorous preparations made both for defence and attack. Pennsylvania alone was utterly defenceless. The banks of the Delaware had not a fort, nor a battery, nor a gun ; and Philadelphia lay a tempting prize that even a well-armed privateer could seize and sack. But, in 1746, Franklin visited Boston, which, at that time, was in a military ferment. He caught the spirit of the Bostonians, and became seriously alarmed for the safety of Philadelphia. On his return home, finding it still impossible to move the assembly, he resolved to attempt the defence of the city by the voluntary labours of the people.

He wrote a consummately artful pamphlet of twenty-two pages called "Plain Truth," in which he employed every argument that could have weight with any class of the inhabitants. He appealed to their pride as Britons, and to their interests as Pennsylvanians. He dwelt upon the example of the other colonies. For the non-resistant Quakers he inserted a biblical argument to show the rightfulness of defensive war. He enlarged upon the wealth of Philadelphia, and showed how probable it was that an enemy

would discover its defenceless state, and what an easy capture it would be. The power of the great Indian tribes, and the influence of the French over some of them, furnished him with powerful arguments. He pointed out the ruin that would come upon the trade of the province if ships of the enemy should even obstruct the navigation of the river. The party divisions of the province, the proprietary party, the Quakers, the gentlemen, the tradesmen, all the attachments and all the antipathies of the town were skilfully referred to and turned to account. And lest any class should escape him, he inserted one tremendous passage that appealed to a feeling that was universal—*fear*. The passage shows the frightful cruelty with which war was formerly carried on.

“On the first alarm, terror will spread over all ; and, as no man can with certainty depend that another will stand by him, beyond doubt very many will seek safety by a speedy flight. Those that are reputed rich, will flee, through fear of torture, to make them produce more than they are able. The man that has a wife and children will find them hanging on his neck, beseeching him with tears to quit the city and save his life, to guide and protect them in that time of general desolation and ruin. All will run into confusion, amidst cries and lamentations, and the hurry and disorder of departers carrying away their effects. The few that remain will be unable to resist. Sacking the city will be the first, and burning it, in all probability, the last act of the enemy. This, I believe, will be the case, if you have timely notice. But what must be your condition, if suddenly surprised, without previous alarm, perhaps in the night ! Confined to your houses, you will have nothing to trust to but the enemy's mercy. Your best fortune will be to fall under the power of

commanders of kings' ships, able to control the mariners, and not into the hands of *licentious privateers*. Who can, without the utmost horror, conceive the miseries of the latter, when your persons, fortunes, wives, and daughters shall be subject to the wanton and unbridled rage, rapine, and lust of negroes, mulattoes, and others, the vilest and most abandoned of mankind. A dreadful scene! which some may represent as exaggerated. I think it my duty to warn you; judge for yourselves."

The effect of this pamphlet was all that Franklin could have wished. A few days after its appearance he called a meeting of the citizens; he harangued the multitude, urged them to form themselves into an association for defence, and invited all present to enrol themselves that very night, by signing the papers which he had previously placed about the room. Twelve hundred names were immediately subscribed; ten thousand in a few days; and, before many days had passed, nearly every man in the province who was not a Quaker had joined a military organisation, had procured some kind of weapon, and was learning the exercise. Eighty companies were soon ready to march to any threatened point. In Philadelphia the companies united to form a regiment, and elected Franklin their colonel. "Conceiving myself unfit," he says, "I declined that station, and recommended Mr Lawrence, a fine person, and a man of influence, who was accordingly appointed."

Some of Franklin's friends feared that his warlike zeal would destroy his influence in the Assembly, wherein the Quaker influence was supreme. One young man, who had his eye upon the clerkship, went so far as to advise him to resign in order to avoid the disgrace of being dismissed.

Franklin told him, in reply, that he had heard of a public man who made it a rule never to seek and never to decline office. "I," said Franklin, "approve of this rule, and shall practise it with a small addition: I shall never ask, never refuse, and never resign an office." At the next election he was again chosen clerk by a unanimous vote.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, signed by the British Commissioners, October 7th, 1748, put an end to the apprehensions of the colonies. The part played by Franklin during the period of alarm enhanced his influence in Pennsylvania, brought him into confidential relations with the Governor, the Council, and the circle of leading men, and accustomed the people of Philadelphia to regard him as their leader and refuge in time of trouble.

At this time the parents of Franklin were still living. They were both very old, and had begun to sink under the infirmities to which the aged are subject. He wrote to them tenderly and thoughtfully respecting their complaints, suggesting remedies in his usual modest way. "I apprehend I am too busy," he wrote on one occasion, "in prescribing and meddling in the doctor's sphere, when any of you complain of ails in your letters. But as I always employ a physician myself when any disorder arises in my family, and submit implicitly to his orders in everything, so I hope you consider my advice, when I give any, only as a mark of my good-will, and put no more of it in practice than happens to agree with what your doctor directs." Then follows a considerable essay on their disease. In 1744, at the great age of eighty-nine years, his father died. Franklin concluded his next letter to his sister Jane with these words:—"Dear sister, I love you tenderly for your care of our father in his sickness."

In the *Boston News Letter* of January 17th, 1745, the death of Josiah Franklin was noticed thus:—"Last night died Mr Josiah Franklin, tallow-chandler and soapmaker. By the force of a steady temperance, he had made a constitution, none of the strongest, last with comfort to the age of eighty-nine years; and by an entire dependence on his Redeemer, and a consistent course of the strictest piety and virtue, he was enabled to die as he lived, with cheerfulness and peace, leaving a numerous posterity the honour of being descended from a person who, through a long life, supported the character of *an honest man.*"

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CHAPTER XII.

RESEARCHES IN ELECTRICITY.



IN 1745, the Leyden jar was discovered; and an extraordinary impulse was given to the study and progress of electricity all over Europe. Mr Peter Collinson, the London agent for the Library of Philadelphia, having been accustomed to send, with the annual parcel of books, any particular book or curious object as a gift, sent as his contribution for 1746 one of those wonderful electrical tubes, with a paper of directions for using it.

A few weeks before its arrival, Franklin had seen one in Boston, the property of Dr Spence, who had recently brought it from Scotland. The usual electrical experiments were performed by Dr Spence in his presence, whom they astonished and entertained, for the subject was absolutely new to him. No sooner, therefore, was the tube unpacked at the Philadelphia Library, than he eagerly seized the opportunity to repeat the experiments, which he had witnessed in Boston, as well as those described by Mr Collinson. The subject completely fascinated him. He gave himself wholly up to it. Procuring other tubes at the Philadelphia Glass-works, he distributed them among his friends, and set the whole junto to the study of electricity. "I never," he wrote, early in 1747, "was before engaged in

any study that so totally engrossed my attention and my time as this has lately done ; for, what with making experiments when I can be alone, and repeating them to my friends and acquaintance, who, from the novelty of the thing, come continually in crowds to see them, I have, during some months past, had little leisure for anything else."

To the greater number, of course, the electrical tube was a new toy only, which amused them for a time, and was then laid aside. Three Philadelphians, however, besides Franklin, continued to make the new science a subject of constant study and laborious experiment: Ebenezer Kinnersley, Thomas Hopkinson, and Philip Syng. The four experimenters pursued their subject both separately and together, each animated by a pure desire to know more of this wonderful and mysterious element.

During the whole of the winter of 1746-7, Franklin and his friends were devoted to electricity. They experimented frequently with points, the power of which to draw off electricity from an excited body had early engaged their attention. Electrical attraction and repulsion were observed with the utmost care. That electricity is not created, but only collected by friction, was one of their first conjectures ; the correctness of which they soon demonstrated by a great number of experiments. Franklin's theory of plus and minus, or positive and negative electricity, was reached in this first season of his experimenting, since we find it imperfectly stated in a letter dated July 1747. Before having heard of the coating of the Leyden jar with tinfoil, the Philadelphia experimenters substituted granulated lead for the water employed by Professor Maschenbroeck. They fired spirits, and lighted candles with the electrical spark ; they improved the electrical kiss, so that a shock was given, in-

stead of a mere spark at the moment of contact. They performed rare tricks with a spider made of burnt cork ; to the wonder and delight of young Philadelphia.

Most of these things had been done or suggested in Europe before ; but some of them, too, were original discoveries of the Philadelphians, who had heard nothing of them. The plus and minus theory, although two English observers had approached it, was the unassisted conclusion of these Pennsylvanian philosophers. In his first letter to Mr Collinson on electricity, Franklin said that the experiments and observations made by himself and his friends, though new in the new world, had probably been anticipated in Europe by one or more of the many persons daily employed there on electrical experiments.

The summer of 1747 was devoted, as we have seen, to preparing the province for defence. But during the autumn and winter following, the four Philadelphians resumed their electrical experiments, the results of which Franklin detailed in other letters to Mr Collinson. The wondrous Leyden jar was the object of Franklin's incessant observation. He was never weary of experimenting with it. Having applied to it his plus and minus theory, he exhausted even his ingenuity in devising experiments to place his explanation beyond the possibility of question. That the electric shock was only the sudden restoration of the electrical equilibrium, he not only proved, but *showed*, by making the rush of electricity visible along the gilding of a book.

As a specimen of his mode of investigating, take a single passage, descriptive of one of the discoveries of this second electrical winter. The Leyden phial used in these masterly experiments was Maschenbroeck's original invention, a mere bottle of water, with a wire piercing the cork.

“Purposing,” wrote Franklin, “to analyse the electrified bottle, in order to find wherein its strength lay, we placed it on glass, and drew out the cork and wire, which for that purpose had been loosely put in. Then taking the bottle in one hand, and bringing a finger of the other near its mouth, a strong spark came from the water, and the shock was as violent as if the wire had remained in it, which showed that the force did not lie in the wire. Then, to find if it resided in the water, being crowded into and condensed in it, as confined by the glass, which had been our former opinion, we electrified the bottle again, and, placing it on glass, drew out the wire and cork as before; then, taking up the bottle, we decanted all its water into an empty bottle, which likewise stood on glass; and taking up that other bottle, we expected, if the force resided in the water, to find a shock from it; but there was none. We judged then that it must either be lost in decanting, or remain in the first bottle. The latter we found to be true; for that bottle on trial gave the shock, though filled up as it stood with fresh unelectrified water from a tea-pot. To find, then, whether glass had this property merely as glass, or whether the form contributed anything to it, we took a pane of sash-glass, and, laying it on the hand, placed a plate of lead on its upper surface; then electrified that plate, and bringing a finger to it, there was a spark and shock. We then took two plates of lead of equal dimensions, but less than the glass by two inches every way, and electrified the glass between them, by electrifying the uppermost lead; then separated the glass from the lead, in doing which, what little fire might be in the lead was taken out, and the glass being touched in the electrified parts with a finger, afforded only very small pricking sparks, but a great num-

ber of them might be taken from different places. Then dexterously placing it again between the leaden plates, and completing a circle between the two surfaces, a violent shock ensued · which demonstrated the power to reside in glass as glass, and that the non-electrics in contact served only, like the armature of a loadstone, to unite the force of the several parts, and bring them at once to any point desired ; it being the property of a non-electric, that the whole body instantly receives or gives what electrical fire is given to, or taken from, any one of its parts.

“ Upon this we made what we called an *electrical battery*, consisting of eleven panes of large sash-glass, armed with thin leaden plates, pasted on each side, placed vertically, and supported at two inches’ distance on silk cords, with thick hooks of leaden wire, one from each side, standing upright, distant from each other, and convenient communications of wire and chain, from the giving side of one pane to the receiving side of the other ; that so the whole might be charged together, and with the same labour as one single pane.”

This battery was soon superseded by one consisting of a series of Leyden jars, which was found more convenient, and the power of which many a too eager electrician besides Franklin has experienced.

Mr Kinnersley, this winter, contrived the amusing experiment of the magical picture. A figure of his majesty, King George II., (“ God preserve him,” says the loyal Franklin, in a parenthesis, when telling the story,) was so arranged that any one who attempted to take his crown from his head, received a tremendous shock. Franklin contrived an electric wheel, which revolved with considerable force, and by the aid of his battery of jars, he gave shocks powerful enough

to kill a hen. The main result, however, of this winter's experimenting was the explanation of the Leyden jar; an explanation to which subsequent inquirers have been able to add nothing of importance. Indeed, we may say, that the *essentials* of the theory of electricity, as now taught in our schools, were established by Franklin during this season. As the spring drew on, the experimenters slackened their diligence, and Franklin summed up their winter's work in a long letter to Mr Collinson, which concluded with these words:—

“Chagrined a little that we have been hitherto able to produce nothing in this way of use to mankind, and the hot weather coming on, when electrical experiments are not so agreeable, it is proposed to put an end to them for this season, somewhat humorously, in a party of pleasure on the banks of the *Schuylkill*. Spirits, at the same time, are to be fired by a spark sent from side to side through the river, without any other conductor than the water; an experiment which we some time since performed, to the amazement of many. A turkey is to be killed for our dinner by the *electrical shock*, and roasted by the *electrical jack*, before a fire kindled by the *electrified bottle*; when the healths of all the famous electricians in England, Holland, France, and Germany are to be drunk in *electrified bumpers*, under the discharge of guns from the *electrical battery*.”

The summer of 1748 brought with it a prospect of peace, which the autumn fulfilled. Franklin again looked forward to a winter of electrical studies.

And now this man, whose name throughout Christendom is another word for the undue love of money, gave a striking proof that he knew the exact worth of it, and valued it for what it is worth, and for no more. He had been

twenty years in business. He was forty-two years of age. He had acquired an estate, which, as I conjecture, yielded about seven hundred pounds a year, which was then esteemed a handsome income for a retiring tradesman. In a colonial town, a hundred years ago, an income of seven hundred pounds a year would buy everything that a man of sense ever wants, either for himself or for his family. Besides this independence, Franklin was the holder of two offices worth together, perhaps, one hundred and fifty pounds a year. His business, then more flourishing than ever, produced an annual profit, as before computed, of two thousand pounds, bringing up his income to the amount of nearly three thousand pounds. Yearning to devote the rest of his life to science, Franklin, in September 1748, offered to dispose of his printing business to his foreman, David Hall, who had then been in his employment some years, and had proved himself to be a man of ability and worth. The terms of the sale were these: Hall to have the control of the business as though it were wholly his own; to pay Franklin a thousand pounds a year for eighteen years; then to become the sole proprietor without further consideration; the business, meanwhile, to be carried on in the names of Franklin and Hall, and Franklin to assist in editing the *Gazette* and *Poor Richard*. On these or similar terms the partnership was formed, in the autumn of 1748, and Franklin was free to pursue his favourite pursuits with little hindrance.

In a letter to a friend, dated September 20, 1748, he communicates his purpose to retire, and adds:—"I have removed to a more quiet part of the town, where I am settling my old accounts, and hope soon to be quite master of my own time, and no longer, as the song has it, *at every*

one's call but my own. If health continue, I hope to be able in another year to visit the most distant friend I have, without inconvenience. With the same views I have refused engaging further in public affairs. The share I had in the late Association (for defence) having given me a little present run of popularity, there was a pretty general intention of choosing me a representative of the city at the next election of Assemblymen; but I have desired all my friends, who spoke to me about it, to discourage it, declaring that I should not serve if chosen. Thus you see I am in a fair way of having no other tasks than such as I shall like to give myself, and of enjoying what I look upon as a great happiness, leisure to read, study, make experiments, and converse at large with such ingenious and worthy men as are pleased to honour me with their friendship or acquaintance, on such points as may produce something for the common benefit of mankind, uninterrupted by the little cares and fatigues of business."

Soon after, Dr Spence brought from England a considerable electrical apparatus, intending to lecture in the colonies. Upon his arriving in Philadelphia, Franklin bought his apparatus.

On resuming his electrical studies, he confined his observations no longer to the electricity gathered by the machine, but essayed to discover the part played in nature by this wonderful element. The patience with which he observed the electrical phenomena of the heavens, the acuteness displayed by him in drawing from his observations plausible inferences, and the rapidity with which he arrived at all that we now know of thunder and lightning, still excite the astonishment of those who read the graphic narratives he has left us of his proceedings. All the winter of 1748-49,

and all the summer following, he was feeling his way to his final conclusions on this subject. He drew up early in 1749 a series of fifty-six observations, entitled "Observations and Suppositions towards forming a new Hypothesis for explaining the several Phenomena of Thunder-gusts." Nearly all that he afterwards demonstrated on this subject is anticipated in this truly remarkable paper, which was the product of a great understanding grappling with a subject worthy of its powers. He followed it soon with the most elaborate and celebrated of all his electrical writings, entitled "Opinions and Conjectures concerning the Properties and Effects of the Electrical Matter, and the means of Preserving Buildings, Ships, &c., from Lightning, arising from Experiments and Observations made at Philadelphia, 1749."

The two grand topics of this paper are the power of points to draw off electricity and the similarity of electricity and lightning. It is this treatise which contains the two suggestions which gave to the name of Franklin its first celebrity, and which we may safely style immortal. Both these suggestions are contained in one brief passage, which follows the description of an experiment, in which a miniature lightning-rod had conducted harmlessly away the electricity of an artificial thunder-storm.

"If these things are so," continued the philosopher, after stating the results of his experiment, "may not the knowledge of this power of points be of use to mankind, in preserving houses, churches, ships, &c., from the stroke of lightning, by directing us to fix, on the highest part of those edifices, upright rods of iron made sharp as a needle, and gilt to prevent rusting, and from the foot of those rods, a wire down the outside of the building into the ground, or down round one of the shrouds of a ship, and down her

side till it reaches the water? Would not these pointed rods probably draw the electrical fire silently out of a cloud before it came nigh enough to strike, and thereby secure us from that most sudden and terrible mischief?"

Franklin introduces this topic with a sort of humorous half-apology. He confesses that he cannot tell why points possess this curious power; nor is it necessary, he adds, that we should understand it. "It is of real use to know that china left in the air unsupported will fall and break; but *how* it comes to fall, and *why* it breaks, are matters of speculation. It is a pleasure indeed to know them, but we can preserve our china without it."

The second of these suggestions was the one that immediately arrested the attention of European electricians when at last the paper was published. It was given in these words:—

"To determine the question, whether the clouds that contain lightning are electrified or not, I would propose an experiment to be tried where it may be done conveniently. On the top of some high tower or steeple, place a kind of sentry-box, big enough to contain a man and an electric stand. From the middle of the stand let an iron rod rise and pass bending out of the door, and then upright twenty or thirty feet, pointed very sharp at the end. If the electrical stand be kept clean and dry, a man standing on it, when such clouds are passing low, might be electrified and afford sparks, the rod drawing fire to him from a cloud. If any danger to the man should be apprehended, (though I think there would be none,) let him stand on the floor of his box, and now and then bring near to the rod the loop of a wire that has one end fastened to the leads, he holding it by a wax handle; so the sparks, if the rod is elec-

trified, will strike from the rod to the wire, and not affect him."

The fourth season of Franklin's electrical experiments was marked by nothing more interesting than an accident which has since befallen many careless operators. He was about to kill a turkey by an electric shock one day, for the amusement of some friends, and, for that purpose, had charged two jars, each holding six gallons. Inadvertently, while talking with the company, he took the shock himself.

"The flash," he wrote, "was very great, and the crack as loud as a pistol; yet, my senses being instantly gone, I neither saw the one nor heard the other; nor did I feel the stroke on my hand, though I afterwards found it raised a round swelling where the fire entered, as big as half a pistol-bullet; by which you may judge of the quickness of the electrical fire, which by this instance seems to be greater than that of sound, light, or animal sensation. . . . I then felt what I know not how well to describe, a universal blow throughout my whole body from head to foot, which seemed within as well as without; after which the first thing I took notice of was a violent quick shaking of my body, which gradually remitting, my sense as gradually returned, and then I thought the bottles must be discharged, but could not conceive how, till at last I perceived the chain in my hand, and recollected what I had been about to do. That part of my hand and fingers which held the chain was left white, as though the blood had been driven out, and remained so eight or ten minutes after, feeling like dead flesh; and I had a numbness in my arms and the back of my neck, which continued till the next morning, but wore off. Nothing remains now of this shock but a soreness in my breast-bone, which feels as if it had been bruised. I did not fall,

but suppose I should have been knocked down if I had received the stroke in my head. The whole was over in less than a minute."

He cautions his correspondent not to make public "so notorious a blunder," which he compares with that of the Irishman who, being about to steal gunpowder, made a hole in the cask with a red-hot poker. Afterwards he knocked down six men by an electric shock, the men submitting themselves to the experiment for the sake of science. On another occasion, while preparing to give a shock to a paralytic patient, he accidentally received an immense charge through his own head. He neither saw the flash, heard the report, nor felt the stroke. "When my senses returned," he says, "I found myself on the floor. I got up, not knowing how that had happened. I then again attempted to discharge the jars; but one of the company told me they were already discharged, which I could not at first believe, but on trial found it true. They told me they had not felt it, but they saw I was knocked down by it, which had greatly surprised them. On recollecting myself, and examining my situation, I found the case clear. A small swelling rose on the top of my head, which continued sore for some days; but I do not remember any other effect, good or bad."

Such accidents as these came to be regarded by the enthusiastic electricians of that day as soldiers regard wounds received in battle.

And so these busy, honourable years passed on. When the spring of 1752 came, six years had elapsed since Franklin first interested himself in science. The leisure of six winters had been devoted to electrical experiments. Nearly three years had rolled away since he had suggested,

in his private diary, a mode of ascertaining whether lightning and electricity were really the same ; and yet such an experiment had never been attempted.

In the spring of 1752, he thought of trying the experiment with a kite ; and it was during one of the June thunder-storms of that year that the immortal kite was flown.

Who does not know the story ? How he made his kite of a large silk handkerchief, and fastened to the top of the perpendicular stick a piece of sharpened iron-wire. How he stole away, upon the approach of a storm, into the common not far from his own house, near a spot where there was an old cow-shed ; how, wishing to avoid the ridicule of possible failure, he told no one what he was going to do except his son, who accompanied him ; how the kite was raised in time for the coming gust, the string being hempen, except the part held in the hand, which was silk ; how, at the termination of the hempen string a common key was fastened ; and in the shed was deposited a Leyden bottle, in which to collect from the clouds, if the clouds should prove to contain it, the material requisite for an electric shock. How father and son stood for some time under the shed, presenting the spectacle, if there had been any one to behold it, of two escaped lunatics flying a kite in the rain ; the young gentleman, no doubt, feeling a little foolish ; how, at last, when a thunder-cloud appeared to pass directly over the kite, and yet no sign of electricity appeared, the hopes of the father, too, began to grow faint ; how, when both were ready to despair of success, Franklin's heart stood still, as he suddenly observed the fibres of the hempen string to rise ; how, with eager, trembling hand, he applied his knuckle to the key and drew therefrom an unmistakable spark, and another and another, and as many as he chose ;

how the Leyden phial was charged, and both received the most thrilling shock ever experienced by man; a shock that might have been figuratively styled electric, if electric it had not really been. How, the wet kite being drawn in, and the apparatus packed, the philosopher went home exulting—the happiest philosopher in Christendom.

And this was only the beginning of triumph. The next ships that arrived from the old world brought him the news that the same experiment, in the mode originally suggested by him of erecting an iron rod upon an eminence, had been successfully performed in France, so that his name had suddenly become one of the most famous in Europe.

Three French philosophers, the Count de Buffon, M. Dalibard, and M. de Lor, erected upon different heights the apparatus suggested by Franklin for drawing electricity from the clouds. M. Dalibard was first successful. On the 10th of May 1752, a month before Franklin flew his kite, the pointed rod erected by M. Dalibard drew from a thunder-cloud electricity enough to afford a complete demonstration of the correctness of Franklin's hypothesis. M. de Lor succeeded a few days later; the Count de Buffon ere long; and before the summer was ended, the philosophers of every country in Europe were employed in repeating the experiment. At St Petersburg, Professor Richman, the "justly envied," entered upon a course of splendid and daring investigation, and brought from the clouds, at length, such quantities of the electric fluid, that a chance shock struck him dead, and his body was found in the midst of his apparatus, like an artilleryman dead under the wreck of his gun. ✱

The name of Franklin became at once familiar to every reading person in Europe, and his letters were universally

admired for their fulness of matter, their clearness of style, their modesty of tone. There was something in the conception of drawing down, for mere experiment, the dread electricity of heaven, that appealed not less powerfully to the understanding of the learned than to the imagination of the ignorant ; and the marvel was the greater that the bold idea should have originated in a place so remote and so little known as Philadelphia. The Royal Society soon learned the worth of Franklin's electrical writings, now that all mankind knew it, and by a unanimous vote he was elected a member of that distinguished body ; they bestowed upon him, with every honourable circumstance, the Copley medal. Yale College first, then Harvard, conferred upon him the honorary degree of master of arts.

Franklin was too healthy-minded and too modest a man not to take pleasure in his new fame. "The *Tatler*," he wrote in 1753 to one of his Boston friends, "tells us of a girl who was observed to grow suddenly proud, and none could guess the reason, till it came to be known that she had got on a pair of new silk garters. Lest you should be puzzled to guess the cause, when you observe anything of the kind in me, I think I will not hide my new garters under my petticoats, but take the freedom to show them to you, in a paragraph of our friend Collinson's last letter, viz.— But I ought to mortify, and not indulge, this vanity ; I will not transcribe the paragraph, yet I cannot forbear." He then quotes the paragraph, which alludes to the honour done him by the king of France, and the attention bestowed on his discoveries in the Royal Society.

He continued his electrical studies ; no longer pausing during the summer heats, but using then, for his own purposes, the exhaustless electricity of the clouds. He grew

familiar with the lightning, and brought it down into his library for constant examination. "In September 1752," he wrote to Peter Collinson, "I erected an iron rod to draw the lightning down into my house, in order to make some experiments on it, with two bells to give notice when the rod should be electrified; a contrivance obvious to every electrician. I found the bells rang sometimes when there was no lightning or thunder, but only a dark cloud over the rod; that sometimes, after a flash of lightning, they would suddenly stop; and at other times, when they had not rung before, they would, after a flash, suddenly begin to ring; that the electricity was sometimes very faint, so that when a small spark was obtained, another could not be got for some time after; at other times the sparks would follow extremely quick, and once I had a continual stream from bell to bell, the size of a crow-quill; even during the same gust there were considerable variations. In the winter following I conceived an experiment, to try whether the clouds were electrified *positively* or *negatively*."

And after a long series of experiments, he had the delight of establishing the unexpected truth, that thunder-clouds are usually in a negative state of electricity; and that, consequently, it is the earth that strikes into the clouds, not the clouds the earth.

But we cannot continue these details. For twenty years Franklin was an ardent electrician, and the leisure of seven of those years was devoted almost exclusively to the subject. He subjected electricity to every test and every influence that the most fertile brain in the world could suggest. He tried it upon magnets. He tried it upon the sick and upon the healthy; upon animals and men. The electricity excited by friction, the electricity drawn from the clouds, the

electricity generated in the cold and glittering winter nights, the electricity of the electric eel, were all observed and compared. He became the acknowledged head of the electricians of the world. He had electrical correspondents in many countries. Masters of ships, who encountered remarkable thunder-storms, would send narratives of what they had seen to Mr Franklin of Philadelphia. By very slow degrees lightning-rods made their way:* it was ten years before their use became general in the colonies, and twenty years before they were common in England. Franklin's house was a museum of electrical apparatus, and ladies who visited him, it is said, were sometimes terribly frightened at the sudden, and apparently causeless, ringing of his electric bell. Mr D'Israeli picked up an anecdote of Franklin and electricity, for his "Curiosities of Literature," which is, doubtless, as true as many other narratives in that

* The following appeared in *Poor Richard's Almanac* for 1753:—

"*How to secure Houses, &c., from Lightning*:—It has pleased God in his Goodness to Mankind, at length to discover to them the Means of securing their Habitations and other Buildings from Mischief by Thunder and Lightning. The Method is this: Provide a small Iron Rod, (it may be made of the Rod-iron used by Nailers,) but of such a length, that one End being three or four Feet in the moist Ground, the other may be six or eight Feet above the highest part of the Building. To the upper End of the Rod fasten about a foot of Brass Wire, the size of a common Knitting-needle, Sharpened to a fine Point; the Rod may be secured in the House by a few small Staples. If the House or Barn be long, there may be a Rod and Point at each End, and a middling Wire along the Ridge from one to the other. A House thus furnished will not be damaged by Lightning, it being attracted by the Points, and passing through the Metal into the Ground without hurting any Thing. Vessels also having a sharp pointed Rod fix'd on the top of their Masts, with a Wire from the Foot of the Rod reaching down, round one of the Shrouds, to the Water, will not be hurt by Lightning."

amusing collection: "Franklin, finding that the idlers of the street were too fond of coming to a halt under one of his windows, charged the railing with his newly-discovered electric fire." Remarkable incidents occurred, adds the author, which at a former period would have lodged "the great discoverer of electricity" in the Inquisition.*

Franklin was the man of all others then alive who possessed, in the greatest perfection, the four grand requisites for the successful observation of nature, or the pursuit of literature: a sound and great understanding; patience; dexterity; and an independent income. Having these qualities and advantages, living too in an age that delighted to bestow honour upon men of science, and his attention having been drawn to a branch in which everything was still to be explained, and many things discovered, he achieved as much for the advancement of science as the most favoured individuals, in the narrow compass of a lifetime, can be expected to accomplish. And if he had not been drawn away from the study of nature into politics, he would, doubtless, have arrived at many truths, which, in his time, were only conjectures, or were not yet conjectured.

* "Curiosities of Literature."



CHAPTER XIII.

PUBLIC SERVICES ABOUT 1750.



WHILE adding to the sum of knowledge, Franklin engaged in a scheme for diffusing it. In 1743, when his son was thirteen years old, and his own circumstances had become such as to entitle the boy to a liberal education, he awoke to the fact, that neither in Pennsylvania nor in New York was there a college or a high school. He made some slight attempt to found an academy in Philadelphia at that time, but circumstances were not propitious, and the war intervening, the project was laid aside for six years. In 1749, the country being at peace, and himself at leisure, he renewed his endeavours, though his son was then grown past the need of an academy : “nineteen years of age, a tall, proper youth, and much of a beau,” wrote his father.

According to his custom, he had recourse, first of all, to the Junto, who had then shed their leathern aprons, and become prosperous gentlemen in broadcloth. Several members of the club entered warmly into the scheme, which found friends also in other clubs and circles of Philadelphia. The next step was to propitiate the public, which he accomplished by writing a pamphlet, entitled, “Proposals relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania,”

a copy of which he caused to be delivered to each of the subscribers to the *Gazette*.

The effect of this pamphlet was, that the scheme was favourably received, and, after a little hesitation, adopted with eagerness, and, under the influence and good management of the proposer, no less a sum than five thousand pounds was almost immediately subscribed, to be paid in five annual instalments; and before the year ended, the school was opened. Pupils flocked to it in such numbers that it was soon necessary to procure a larger building. It so happened that the church built during the stay of Whitefield for the purpose of affording a pulpit to any minister who might wish to address the people of Philadelphia, had become available for the purpose. The religious enthusiasm having abated, the ground-rent of the edifice had not been punctually paid, and other debts had accumulated. Franklin, being a trustee both of the church and of the academy, negotiated a transfer of the property to the trustees of the latter, who agreed to pay the debts, and for ever preserve in the building a large hall for occasional preachers. The building was soon adapted to its new purpose, Franklin engaging the workmen, buying the materials, and superintending the work. And thus was founded the institution that became, in 1779, the "University of Pennsylvania," and which still flourishes under the same name, the chief of the institutions of learning of which that city boasts.

No sooner was the academy well started than he was drawn into another worthy enterprise, that of founding an hospital in Philadelphia; a project conceived by an intimate friend of his, Dr Thomas Bond. Sick immigrants had hitherto been lodged in unoccupied houses, and upon the islands in the Delaware, often to their own and the city's

detriment. Dr Bond, finding the people reluctant to subscribe, the scheme being a novel one in the colonies, went to Franklin to consult him on the subject. "There is no such thing," said the doctor to Franklin, "as carrying through a public-spirited project unless you are concerned in it; for I am often asked by those to whom I propose subscribing, 'Have you consulted Franklin on this business? And what does he think of it?' And when I tell them that I have not, (supposing it rather out of your line,) they do not subscribe, but say, 'they will consider it.'"

Franklin entered heartily into the enterprise, wrote in favour of it in the *Gazette*, subscribed liberally himself, and obtained subscriptions from others. Nevertheless, it soon appeared that money enough could not be obtained by voluntary subscriptions, and Franklin sought help from the Legislative Assembly. The country members, however, objected, saying that since the hospital was designed for the benefit of the city, the city should bear the whole expense. In these circumstances Franklin played off upon the Assembly one of those harmless tricks by which he occasionally carried important points. He asked from the Assembly a grant of two thousand pounds, not to be paid until it should be shown that the public had voluntarily contributed two thousand pounds. "This condition," says Franklin, "carried the bill through; for the members who had opposed the grant, and now conceived that they might have the credit of being charitable without the expense, agreed to its passage; and then, in soliciting subscriptions among the people, we urged the conditional promise of the law, as an additional motive to give, since every man's donation would be doubled: thus the clause worked both ways."

A year or two later, a wing of the Pennsylvania Hospital was erected on its present well-known site. The cornerstone was laid by the first-born of the city, amid a mighty concourse of people. The noble inscription on the cornerstone was written by Franklin: "In the year of CHRIST MDCCLV., George the Second happily reigning, (for he sought the happiness of his people,) Philadelphia flourishing, (for its inhabitants were public-spirited,) this building, by the bounty of the government, and of many private persons, was piously founded for the relief of the sick and miserable. May the GOD OF MERCIES bless the undertaking."

It is hardly necessary to say, that the Pennsylvania Hospital, from that time to this, has never ceased to relieve the sick and miserable. It has grown with the growth of the city, until it ranks now among the most extensive and well-conducted establishments of the kind in Christendom. Franklin might well say: "I do not remember any of my political manœuvres, the success of which, at the time, gave me more pleasure, or wherein, after thinking of it, I more easily excused myself for **having** made some use of cunning."

With regard to the candid, unreserved manner in which Franklin often confessed his good deeds, the reader should be informed that he did it on principle. It was his belief that people ought not to indulge the intense vanity of concealing their virtuous actions, but should speak of them fully and freely, as though it were not such a very extraordinary thing that a man should do a good deed. He admired the modest manner in which Æneas begins his story to Dido in Virgil: "I am the dutiful Æneas whose fame has pierced the skies;" which was merely his way of

saying, "I am that Æneas of whom you have doubtless heard, who carried his father on his shoulders from burning Troy ; an act, madam, let me tell you, which was not unobserved even by the gods." Who should know better than Æneas, that the rescue of his poor old father was a meritorious action, and who had a better right than he to tell the story? Besides, urges Franklin, if people are forbidden to praise themselves, they learn to gratify their self-love by censuring others, which is a kind of indirect self-praise. Wounded self-love, not natural malevolence, is the principal ingredient in man's wrath against man ; as every one knows who has ever hated, and lived to recover from that folly and think calmly over it. And again : If people make it a dead secret what they think of themselves, how are they ever to be set right if their opinions are erroneous. If a young gentleman addicted to showing off on horseback, should openly and frequently say to his friends, "I sit a horse superbly, do I not?" there would at least be found one individual polite enough to answer the question truly, and say, "No ; you stoop, and turn out your toes." "Upon the whole," concludes Franklin, "I wish the out-of-fashion practice of praising ourselves would, like other old fashions, come round into fashion again."

Being now regarded as a master in the modern art of raising subscriptions, he was applied to by that eccentric preacher, Gilbert Tennent, for advice and assistance in raising money for a new church. Franklin refused his aid, but gave his advice. "In the first place," said Franklin, "I advise you to apply to all those who you know will give something ; next, to those who you are uncertain whether they will give anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given ; and lastly, do not neglect those who

you are sure will give nothing ; for in some of them you may be mistaken." The preacher laughed, thanked his counsellor, and followed his advice by asking everybody. He raised more than the requisite sum, and built a handsome church in Arch Street.

Philadelphia was an unpaved city nearly as late as 1760, and the soil being of clay, the streets were scarcely passable in the rainy season. Franklin, who lived for twenty years in sight of the principal market, had seen with pain the cleanly people wading in mud to the stalls. The ground in and around the market was paved at length through Franklin's exertions, and nothing remained but to keep the pavement clean. "I found," says Franklin, "a poor industrious man who was willing to undertake keeping the pavement clean, by sweeping it twice-a-week, carrying off the dirt from before all the neighbours' doors, for the sum of sixpence per month, to be paid by each house. I then wrote and printed a paper, setting forth the advantages to the neighbourhood that might be obtained from this small expense ; the greater ease in keeping our houses clean, so much dirt not being brought in by people's feet ; the benefit to the shops by more custom, as buyers could more easily get at them ; and by not having, in windy weather, the dust blown in upon their goods. I sent one of these papers to each house, and in a day or two went round to see who would subscribe to an agreement to pay these sixpences ; it was unanimously signed, and, for a time, well executed. All the inhabitants of the city were delighted with the cleanliness of the pavement that surrounded the market, it being a convenience to all, and this raised a general desire to have all the streets paved, and made the people more willing to submit to a tax for that purpose."

It was ten years later, however, before Philadelphia (or "Filthy-dirty," as the farmers' wives of that day were accustomed to call it) was generally paved.

About 1752, we find Franklin a trustee of a society for the benefit of poor Germans; a society which had influential members in England, Holland, and Prussia, as well as in the colonies.

Tradition reports that it is to his quick eye and mind that we owe the introduction into America of the yellow willow. A basket, in which some foreign commodity had been imported, having been thrown into a creek, was observed by Franklin to be putting forth sprouts, several of which he caused to be planted on the ground now occupied by the Philadelphia Custom-House. They took root and proved to be the yellow willow, now so common and so useful.

There is an agricultural anecdote related by Mr John Adams in his diary, that when he was a young man of twenty-four, deep in the study of law, little thinking he should one day be the colleague of Franklin in affairs of the first importance, and writing of him only to disparage him, the impetuous student spent the evening of May 26th, 1760, at Mr Edmund Quincy's, near Boston, "with Mr Wibird and my cousin Zeb;" and, on returning home, recorded "a remarkable instance of Mr Benjamin Franklin's activity and resolution," which he had heard related by Mr Quincy. Mr Franklin, during one of his visits to Massachusetts, had attended Mr Wibird's church, and after church had gone home with Mr Quincy to tea, according to the social custom of the times. At the table, Mr Franklin mentioned that the Rhenish grape-vines had been lately planted at Philadelphia, and succeeded very well. Where-

upon Mr Quincy said, "I wish I could get some into my garden: I doubt not they would do very well in this province." Mr Franklin replied: "Sir, if I can supply you with some of the cuttings I should be glad to." "Thank you," returned Quincy, "I don't know but that some time or other I shall presume to trouble you." And no more was said upon the subject. A few weeks after, Mr Quincy was surprised by a letter from one of Franklin's Boston correspondents, saying that a bundle of the Rhenish slips, sent to him by Mr Franklin, had arrived by sloop from Philadelphia, and awaited his orders. Soon after came a second package by post. Two years later, Franklin was again at Boston, and Mr Quincy called upon him to express his gratitude. "I am sorry, sir, to have given you so much trouble," said Quincy. "Oh," cried Franklin, "the trouble is nothing to me, if the vines do but succeed in your province. However, I was obliged to take more pains than I expected, when I saw you. I had been told the vines were in the city, but I found none, and was obliged to send up to a village seventy miles from the city for them."

It cannot be said of Franklin, as of many other popular men, that he was admired abroad, and detested at home. He was beloved most by those who knew him best. He was most gracious, considerate, and polite to those by whom contrary behaviour would have been least resented. Many writings of Franklin exhibit him in a light extremely favourable; but his letters to his mother, his sisters, his brothers, and other relations, are incomparably sweet and engaging. His mother, in these his prosperous years, was sinking slowly to the grave, with little pain, by the natural decay of her powers. He wrote to her frequently, and she to him, when she was past eighty-four.

The good old lady slept the sleep that knows no waking, in May 1752.

Her remains were laid beside those of her husband, in the Granary Burial Ground in Boston; and over the grave, their son Benjamin, soon after, placed a stone, bearing the well-known inscription:—

JOSIAH FRANKLIN and ABIAH his wife
lie here interred.

They lived lovingly together in wedlock fifty-five years;
and without an estate or any gainful employment,
by constant labour, and honest industry,
(with God's blessing,)
maintained a large family comfortably;
and brought up thirteen children and seven grand-
children reputably.

From this instance, reader,
be encouraged to diligence in thy calling,
and distrust not Providence.

He was a pious and prudent man,
she a discreet and virtuous woman.

Their youngest son,
in filial regard to their memory,
places this stone.

J. F. born 1655—died 1744,—Æ. 89.

A. F. born 1667—died 1752,—Æ. 85.

After the death of his mother, Franklin's letters to his sister Jane were of the most affectionate and pleasing nature. Once, after the birth of a child, he wrote to her: "My compliments to my new niece, Miss Abiah, and pray her to accept the enclosed piece of gold, to cut her teeth; it may afterwards buy nuts for them to crack." Again, when she had lost a child: "The longer we live we are exposed to more of these strokes of Providence; but, though we consider them as such, and know it is our duty to submit to the Divine will, yet, when it comes to our turn to bear

what so many millions before us have borne, and so many millions after us must bear, we are apt to think our case particularly hard. Consolations, however kindly administered, seldom afford us any relief. Natural affections will have their course, and time proves our best comforter. This I have experienced myself; and, as I know your good sense has suggested to you, long before this time, every argument, motive, and circumstance, that can tend in any degree to relieve your grief, I will not by repeating them renew it. I am pleased to find that, in your troubles, you do not overlook the mercies of God, and that you consider as such the children that are still spared to you. This is a right temper of mind, and must be acceptable to that beneficent Being, who is in various ways continually showering down His blessings upon many, that receive them as things of course, and feel no grateful sentiments arising in their hearts on the enjoyment of them." And again, when death had once more invaded their circle: "As our number diminishes, let our affection to each other rather increase; for, besides its being our duty, it is our interest; since the more affectionate relations are to each other, the more they are respected by the rest of the world."

Franklin always spoke cheerfully of death. When his brother John died, he wrote to one who mourned him: "He who plucks out a tooth, parts with it freely, since the pain goes with it; and he who quits the whole body parts at once with all pains, and possibilities of pains and diseases, which it was liable to or capable of making him suffer. Our friend and we were invited abroad on a party of pleasure, which is to last for ever. His chair was ready first, and he is gone before us. We could not all conveniently start together; and why should you and I be grieved

at this, since we are soon to follow, and know where to find him."

Before accompanying Franklin into public life, we must not omit to observe that, whatever his avocations were, the interests of science were never long forgotten by him. Nor did he confine his studies to electricity. It was at his suggestion that the merchants of Philadelphia, in 1753, and again in 1754, despatched the ship *Argo* to the Polar Seas, for the purpose of discovering a north-west passage. It was he who welcomed to the New World Professor Kalm, the Swedish botanist, and introduced him to every man in the colonies who could forward his views. It was he who discovered the poisonous properties of air exhaled from the lungs, and he who first wrote effectively upon ventilation. He was ever a devourer of books. Several notes of his to Mr Logan have been preserved, which show that he was continually borrowing books from the library of that gentleman, and returning them with brief comments. To Mr Logan, too, who was old and infirm, he conveyed part of his electrical apparatus, both for the purpose of trying upon his "disordered side" the effect of electricity, and to exhibit to him the new experiments.

He never changed his religious opinions; but the conviction grew upon him, that religion was an essential part of human affairs, and that religion could be purified from superstition, not so much by direct attacks upon superstition, as by the promulgation of truth, which, being believed, would inevitably expel from the mind superstitious opinions and terrors. No man felt the moral superiority of the Christian religion more truly than Franklin, but he was devoid of that quality of mind sometimes called reverence,

which attaches sanctity to buildings, places, garments, offices, relics, or other inanimate objects. He has himself told us, with all his own vividness and wit, what he thought respecting religion at this very period. In 1753 he wrote thus to Mr Whitefield :—

“For my own part, when I am employed in serving others, I do not look upon myself as conferring favours, but as paying debts. In my travels, and since my settlement, I have received much kindness from men, to whom I shall never have any opportunity of making the least direct return ; and numberless mercies from God, who is infinitely above being benefited by our services. Those kindnesses from men I can therefore only return to their fellow-men, and I can only show my gratitude for these mercies from God, by a readiness to help His other children and my brethren. For I do not think that thanks and compliments, though repeated weekly, can discharge our real obligations to each other, and much less those to our Creator. You will see in this my notion of good works that I am far from expecting to merit heaven by them. By heaven we understand a state of happiness, infinite in degree, and eternal in duration. I do nothing to deserve such reward. He that, for giving a draught of water to a thirsty person, should expect to be paid with a good plantation, would be modest in his demands compared with those who think they deserve heaven for the little good they do on earth. Even the mixed, imperfect pleasures we enjoy in this world, are rather from God’s goodness than our merit ; how much more such happiness of heaven ! For my part I have not the vanity to think I deserve it, the folly to expect it, nor the ambition to desire it ; but content myself in submitting to the will and


disposal of that God who made me, who has hitherto preserved and blessed me, and in whose fatherly goodness I may well confide, that He will never make me miserable; and that even the afflictions I may at any time suffer shall tend to my benefit."

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CHAPTER XIV.

DEPUTY POSTMASTER-GENERAL.—THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

RANKLIN was not permitted long to devote his well-won leisure to reading, study, and conversation. Not long did he resist the importunities of those who wished to see him employed in the service of the public. His exertions to place the province of Pennsylvania in a condition to defend itself had given particular delight, not only to the citizens in general, but to each class and party of the citizens, and to every branch of the administration.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which delivered the colonies from apprehension, and Franklin's partnership with Hall, took place about the same time in the autumn of 1748. Despite his resolution to decline office, Franklin found himself, before many months had passed, immersed in public business. "The public," he says, "now considering me as a man of leisure, laid hold of me for their purposes ; every part of our civil government, and almost at the same time, imposing some duty upon me." The governor appointed him a justice of the peace. The corporation of the city chose him, first, a member of the common council, and, soon after, alderman. The citizens elected him to represent them in the Assembly, and he did not decline the seat.

We know little of what passed in the Assembly of Pennsylvania during his term of office; and if its debates had been reported, Franklin's share in them would have been small. He was no orator. He spoke rarely, briefly, and with hesitation. Franklin's speeches, like his essays, derived their effect from his inimitable talent for homely illustration, and from the weight of his character. "I was a bad speaker," he remarks; "never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in the choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my point." Elsewhere* he attributes his powers of persuasion to the constant pains he took not to wound the self-love of those whom he addressed.

During Franklin's service in the Legislature, the Speaker and himself were appointed to represent the House at a conference about to be held with the Indians of Ohio, with a view to the conclusion of a new treaty. The French had then begun those encroachments and negotiations which preceded the old French War; and the object of the Pennsylvania Commissioners was to cement the alliance between the English colonists and the Western Indians. The conference was held at Carlisle, and a treaty was negotiated.

"We strictly," says Franklin, "forbade the selling any liquor to them; and, when they complained of this restriction, we told them, that, if they would continue sober during the treaty, we would give them plenty of rum when the business was over. . . . They claimed and received the rum. . . . In the evening, hearing a great noise among them, the commissioners walked to see what was the matter.

* *Vide* page 29.

We found they had made a great bonfire in the middle of the square ; they were all drunk, men and women, quarrelling and fighting. Their dark-coloured bodies, half naked, seen only by the gloomy light of the bonfire, running after and beating one another with firebrands, accompanied by their horrid yellings, formed a scene the most resembling our ideas of hell that could well be imagined ; there was no appeasing the tumult, and we retired to our lodging. At midnight a number of them came thundering at our door, demanding more rum, of which we took no notice. The next day, sensible they had misbehaved in giving us that disturbance, they sent three of their old councillors to make their apology. The orator acknowledged the fault, but laid it upon the rum ; and then endeavoured to excuse the rum by saying, ‘The Great Spirit, who made all things, made everything for some use, and whatever use He designed anything for, that use it should always be put to : now, when He made rum, He said, “Let this be for the Indians to get drunk with ;” and it must be so.’ And, indeed, if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages, in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth, it seems not impossible, that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited the sea-coast.”

In 1753, upon the death of the postmaster-general for America, Benjamin Franklin and William Hunter of Virginia were appointed to succeed him. The post-office in America had never yielded a surplus. The new deputies were generously allowed three hundred pounds a year each, provided they could make the office yield the requisite amount of profit. To secure that object, as well as to im-

prove a branch of the public service, the importance and defects of which he knew better than any other man, Franklin addressed himself.

He named his son controller of the post-office, and the details of the department were managed by him for several years. Franklin gave the postmastership of Philadelphia, first to his son, then to a relative of his wife, and, afterwards, to one of his own brothers. In the summer of 1753, he set out upon a tour of inspection, and visited every post-office in the country except that of Charleston, infusing new vigour into the service, and putting the whole upon an improved footing. For four years he toiled and schemed without reward; nay, at the end of four years, the department owed its chiefs nine hundred pounds. But by that time the new system began to tell, and the American post-office soon yielded the salary of the postmasters, and a small revenue besides; "three times as much clear revenue to the crown as the post-office of Ireland," says Franklin. But that could not have been much, for, as late as 1801, the Irish post-office yielded only twenty thousand pounds a year profit.

Some of the improvements introduced into the colonial post-office by Franklin have remained part of the postal system of the country to this day. It was he who made the carrying of newspapers, which before were carried free, a source of revenue; he compelled his riders to take all the newspapers offered, instead of carrying only those issued by a postmaster; and an unjust and injurious monopoly, from which he himself had suffered, was thus abolished. It was he who first advertised in the newspapers the list of letters remaining in the post-office, and he who first established in the colonial towns the penny-post, which originated in

London in the reign of Charles II. Besides these improvements, he quickened the pace of the post-riders, and increased their number. Instead of a mail between Philadelphia and New York once a week in summer, and twice a month in winter, he soon started a mail from each of the two cities three times a week in summer, and once a week in winter. To get an answer from Boston, a Philadelphian had been obliged to wait six weeks; Franklin reduced the time to three weeks. He reduced the rates of postage very judiciously. The postage upon a letter across the ocean was fixed at one shilling—precisely what it now is. Letters carried along the coast in vessels any distance, short or long, paid fourpence. Letters carried by land paid for sixty miles, fourpence; a hundred miles, sixpence; two hundred miles, eightpence; and every additional hundred miles, twopence. Most of the post-roads were then mere bridle-paths through the forest; several of these Franklin caused to be straightened, and otherwise improved.

Thus, by the end of 1753, Franklin was fairly launched into public life, being employed by his king, by the governor, by the corporation of the city, and by his fellow-citizens. The reputation derived from his discoveries in electricity had by this time enhanced his consequence in America; and his office of deputy postmaster-general made his name a household word from Boston to Charleston. Only two American names were then extensively known in Europe—Jonathon Edwards in the religious world, and Benjamin Franklin in the circles of science.

A little story, related by Franklin himself, gives us a glimpse of the simple old ways of the colonists at this time. "The skipper of a shallop, employed between Cape May and Philadelphia, had done us some small service, for

which he refused to be paid. My wife, understanding that he had a daughter, sent her a present of a new-fashioned cap. Three years after, this skipper being at my house with an old farmer of Cape May, his passenger, he mentioned the cap, and how much his daughter had been pleased with it. 'But,' said he, 'it proved a dear cap to our congregation.' 'How so?' 'When my daughter appeared with it at meeting, it was so much admired, that all the girls resolved to get such caps from Philadelphia; and my wife and I computed, that the whole could not have cost less than a hundred pounds.' 'True,' said the farmer; 'but you do not tell all the story. I think the cap was, nevertheless, an advantage to us; for it was the first thing that put our girls upon knitting worsted mittens for sale at Philadelphia, that they might have wherewithal to buy caps and ribbons there; and you know that that industry has continued, and is likely to continue and increase to a much greater value, and answer better purposes.' Upon the whole, I was more reconciled to this little piece of luxury, since not only the girls were made happier by having fine caps, but the Philadelphians by the supply of warm mittens."

It was well for the colonies that Franklin put the post-office in order just when he did; for, before another year rolled round, its best facilities were put into constant requisition for organising defence against the combined forces of a savage and a civilised foe. The colonies were on the eve of that Seven Years' War, in the course of which it was decided, among other things, which should possess the continent of North America, the Briton or the Gaul. Franklin bore his part in that momentous contest, serving his country both in the council and in the field.

To expel the French from North America was, for seventy five years, the darling desire of the colonists, particularly those of New England. The French interfered with their fisheries. The French estranged their Indians. The French threatened the Western country. The French were the natural enemies of Britons. The French were Roman Catholics. And, to conclude the list of grievances, the French, by the middle of the last century, had grown to be formidable. They held all Canada, claimed the valley of the Mississippi, and were preparing to hem in the English by a line of forts from Niagara to the Gulf of Mexico.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was made because France and England were tired out, because France had lost everything at sea, and England was in danger of losing everything on land, was of such short duration, that as early as 1753 the colonies began to prepare for their greatest, their final struggle with the French. The war which ensued was called in Europe the Seven Years' War; but it began in America two years before hostilities were commenced in Europe. It was in this war that Frederick II. of Prussia performed that startling series of exploits which caused him to be called "the Great:" in this war that young Colonel Washington first heard the whistling of hostile bullets, which he said was music in his ears.

Assuming that the reader is familiar with the important events of this war, we have only to relate the useful and not unimportant part played in it by the unwarlike Franklin.

In June 1754 we find him at the old Dutch town of Albany, in the province of New York, a conspicuous figure in a scene that was animated and picturesque. Twenty-five of the leading men of the seven northern colonies were there assembled by the orders of the home government for

the purpose of meeting the chiefs of the Six Nations, and concerting measures with them for the defence of the country. The four commissioners sent to this conference by the Governor of Pennsylvania were John Penn, Benjamin Franklin, Richard Peters, and Isaac Norris. One of the members from Massachusetts was that Thomas Hutchinson, afterwards Governor of Massachusetts, with whom Franklin was destined in later years to have much to do. James De Lancey, Lieutenant-Governor of New York, whose name survives in that of one of the streets of the city in which he lived, was chosen to preside over this assembly. The town was filled with a concourse of Indians, the hereditary allies of the English, and the hereditary enemies of the French. All the commissioners brought presents for the tribes, and many days were passed in distributing these, and in holding those solemn and tedious talks in which Indians delight.

No sooner had it become clear to Franklin that the French meant war, than his mind darted to the best means of resisting the attack. The French power in North America was wielded by a single hand, and all their measures were parts of one scheme. The power of England, on the contrary, was dissipated among many governments, always independent of one another, often a little jealous, and never too cordial or neighbourly. *We must unite or be overcome*, said Franklin. In May 1754, just before leaving home to attend the Congress at Albany, he published an article to this effect in the *Gazette*, and appended to it one of those allegorical woodcuts of which he was so fond. It was the picture of a snake cut into as many pieces as there were colonies, each piece having upon it the first letter of the name of a colony, and under the whole, in capital letters, appeared the words, JOIN OR DIE. On his way from Phila-

delphia to New York he drew up a plan for the union of the colonies, which, being approved by several of his friends, he determined to offer to the consideration of the Congress.

Upon arriving at Albany, he found that the necessity of union was felt by all the members, several of whom had even prepared plans of union. A committee of seven was appointed to consider the subject, one from each province; Franklin representing Pennsylvania, and Hutchinson Massachusetts. Franklin exhibited his plan, which was duly considered, and compared with those drawn up by other members. His was preferred, amended, reported, and after twelve days' debate approved by the Congress and commended to the favourable consideration of Parliament and the king, without whose authority, it was agreed, nothing could be done. Franklin's scheme of union was remarkably similar to that by which these States were afterwards made one nation. Nevertheless, it came to naught. The home government thought it dangerously democratic, and calculated to make the colonies too formidable.

Another favourite project of Franklin's was also much discussed among the members of the Albany Conference. He was of opinion that nothing would more effectually resist the encroachments of the French than to plant in the western country, beyond the Alleghanies, one, two, or three powerful colonies; the enterprise to be undertaken by a company, and the first expense to be borne by subscription. Single families dared not penetrate those fertile regions of the West, which swarmed with Indians more or less under the influence of the French. But a hundred families, Franklin thought, setting out together, settling in one neighbourhood, and accompanied by a body of adventurous

young men, would be unmolested, and, at the same time, form a living, impassable barrier to the inroads of the Indians and the encroachments of the French. "The new colonies," said he, "would soon be full of people, and from the advantage of their situation become much more terrible to the French settlements than those are now to us." One sentence in Franklin's paper on this subject contains a favourite conceit of his. The French, said he, as soon as war breaks out, set on the Indians to kill and scalp our Western settlers, which has the effect of discouraging marriages; "thus killing thousands of our children before they are born."

This scheme found small favour in England; and, indeed, the war itself soon absorbed all minds on both sides of the Atlantic. Franklin drops a remark in his autobiography which is extremely simple, but also very wise: "Those who govern, having much business on their hands, do not generally like to take the trouble of considering and carrying into execution new projects. The best public measures are therefore seldom adopted from previous wisdom, but forced by the occasion."

Late in the autumn of 1754 Franklin left his home, once more setting his face northward, toward his native city. At Boston, where he was then held in high and general esteem, he spent many happy days of the winter, conversing with old friends and making new ones.

In the spring of 1755, Franklin was drawn into the very vortex of colonial affairs.

The office of Governor of Pennsylvania was at all times an unenviable one. From his position he was constantly embroiled either with the legislature, the people, or with the authorities in England; and few men had ever held the

office long. In these years of rumoured and impending war, when all the colonies were called upon to make greater exertions and support heavier burdens than ever before, James Hamilton, Governor of Pennsylvania, worn out with the irreconcilable disputes which were constantly taking place, threw up his office in June 1754, and Robert Hunter Morris, who was commissioned in his stead, chanced to reach New York when Franklin was passing through that city, on his way to Boston, late in the autumn of the same year.

Franklin and the new governor, being old acquaintances, had an interview on this occasion, during which Morris asked Franklin whether he must expect an uncomfortable administration? "No," said the postmaster; "you may, on the contrary, have a very comfortable one, if you will only take care not to enter into any dispute with the Assembly." "My dear friend," said the governor, "how can you advise my avoiding disputes? You know I love disputing; it is one of my greatest pleasures; however, to show the regard I have for your counsel, I promise you I will, if possible, avoid them."

Franklin continued his journey, and, after a few weeks' absence, was again at New York, on his way home. "There," he wrote, "I met with the votes of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, by which it appeared that, notwithstanding his promise to me, he and the house were already in high contention; and it was a continual battle between them as long as he retained the government. I had my share of it; for, as soon as I got back to my seat in the Assembly, I was put on every committee for answering his speeches and messages, and by the committees always desired to make the drafts. Our answers, as well as

his messages, were often tart, and sometimes indecently abusive."

Franklin, with his usual charity, finds an excuse for this disputatious governor: "He had some reason for loving to dispute, being eloquent, an acute sophister, and, therefore, generally successful in argumentative conversation. He had been brought up to it from a boy; his father, as I have heard, accustoming his children to dispute with one another for his diversion, while sitting at table after dinner; but I think the practice was not wise; for, in the course of my observation, those disputing, contradicting, and confuting people are generally unfortunate in their affairs."

Amid all this contention Franklin and the governor were on excellent terms with one another. In one important instance Franklin was compelled to oppose the governor, or rather, to get at the public money without his concurrence. Massachusetts planned an expedition against Crown Point. Edmund Quincy came to Philadelphia to solicit from the Assembly of Pennsylvania a grant of money in aid of the enterprise, and called upon Franklin for advice how to proceed. Franklin, entering heartily into the business, dictated Mr Quincy's petition, and advocated it in the Assembly, who speedily voted a grant of ten thousand pounds. The same bill contained other clauses, granting various sums for the service of the king; for General Braddock had now arrived in Virginia with his fated army, and all the colonies resounded with warlike preparation. The Governor of Pennsylvania, however, being bound by his inexorable instructions, was obliged to refuse his assent to the bill, unless the hateful clause were inserted, exempting the proprietary estate.

In this extremity, Franklin resorted to management.

There was a Loan Office in the province, upon the trustees of which the Assembly had a legal right to draw without the authorisation of the governor. There was little money at the time in the custody of the trustees, but Franklin proposed to raise the sum required by orders payable in a year, bearing interest at five per cent. The security being ample, and the interest liberal, the orders were eagerly bought; and Mr Quincy soon departed; rejoicing to have succeeded in his mission. "He ever after," says Franklin, "bore me the most cordial and affectionate friendship;" a friendship, we shall find, that was shared by others of the ancient and honourable name of Quincy.

The loyal Pennsylvanians, meanwhile, had heard that the refusal of the Assembly to vote money for the king's service had been misunderstood by General Braddock, who was then at Fredericktown, in Maryland, preparing to march against Fort Duquesne. He had been informed by some means that the Pennsylvanians, while refusing to supply the army of the king, had been selling provisions to the French, had refused aid in opening a road to the western country, and withheld horses and waggons from the British camp. General Braddock, it was said, was more intent to ravage Pennsylvania than to defeat the French. In these circumstances, the Assembly requested Franklin to go to the general's camp, and explain their conduct. He was to go, not as commissioned by them, but as postmaster-general, to arrange a plan by which General Braddock could communicate quickly and safely with the colonial governors. Franklin accepted the mission, mounted his horse, and set out for the camp early in April. Fredericktown is distant from Philadelphia about one hundred and twenty miles. The postmaster-general

was accompanied by the Governor of New York, the Governor of Massachusetts, and by his son William; the governors having been summoned to confer with the general. The four gentlemen and their servants rode southward.

Arrived in camp, Franklin and his companions found themselves in a novel and stirring scene. His first duty was to remove from General Braddock's mind the ill opinion he had imbibed of Pennsylvania. Dining with the general every day, he had abundant opportunity to converse with him, and soon made it clear that the king had no subjects more loyal, and the French no enemies more decided, than the people of Pennsylvania. After a stay of a week or more, as Franklin was about to leave, the officers returned to camp who had been scouring Virginia and Maryland in search of the waggons for the army. The waggons could not be had, because the waggons in that region did not exist. In vain did General Braddock bluster, threaten, and entice. He denounced the ministry for sending an army into a country where the means of transportation could not be procured. He declared the expedition impossible, since the army could not move inland without two hundred waggons and a great train of pack horses.

Franklin, who was present when the irate general was thus relieving his mind, chanced to say he thought it was a pity the army had not landed in Pennsylvania, where every farmer had a waggon. The general turned eagerly to him and said: "Then you, sir, who are a man of interest there, can probably procure them for us; and I beg you will undertake it." Franklin asked what terms were to be offered to the owners of the waggons. He was told to put

on paper the terms he thought necessary. His schedule being approved, he accepted the commission, received the requisite papers and a sum of money, mounted his horse, and, accompanied by his son, rode away to Lancaster in Pennsylvania, sixty miles distant.

Franklin managed the affair with admirable tact. He published an advertisement to the farmers, in which he artfully appealed to each of the great motives that induce men to depart from the routine of their lives—self-interest, fear, pride, and generosity. First, he stated with exactness the terms upon which the waggons and horses were to be hired. To the statement of terms he appended an address, in which he wrought upon the fears and the loyalty of the farmers. There was a quartermaster-general, St Clair, belonging to General Braddock's army, who was held in dread among the people of these counties, and who had threatened to send parties of soldiers through the country, and seize waggons and horses. After expatiating upon the liberality of the terms offered by the Government, he wound up his address in these words :

“ If you do not this service to your king and country voluntarily, when such good pay and reasonable terms are offered to you, your loyalty will be strongly suspected. The king's business must be done ; so many brave troops, come so far for your defence, must not stand idle through your backwardness to do what may be reasonably expected from you ; waggons and horses must be had ; violent measures will probably be used ; and you will be left to seek for a recompense where you can find it, and your case perhaps be little pitied or regarded. I have no particular interest in this affair, as, except the satisfaction of endeavouring to do good, I shall have only my labour for my

pains. If this method of obtaining the waggons and horses is not likely to succeed, I am obliged to send word to the general in fourteen days ; and I suppose Sir John St Clair, the hussar, with a body of soldiers, will immediately enter the province for the purpose ; which I shall be sorry to hear, because I am very sincerely and truly your friend and well-wisher."

But all this would not quite do. The farmers were not satisfied with the security offered. They did not know General Braddock, nor what authority he had to pledge the king's monies. To remove all hesitation, Franklin gave his own bonds for the faithful performance of the contracts, and besides paying out the seven hundred pounds he had received from Braddock, he advanced two hundred pounds more from his own pocket. He returned to camp, having spent two hundred pounds in money, and given bonds for the safe return of twenty thousand pounds' worth of horses and waggons.

His success was triumphant. In twenty days from the date of his accepting the commission he had in camp one hundred and fifty four-horse waggons, two hundred and fifty-nine pack horses, and a considerable quantity of hay and oats for their subsistence. The general thanked him over and over again, repaid the sum he had advanced, entreated him to aid in forwarding supplies after he should have marched, and mentioned him with warm commendation in his despatches home. Franklin undertook the superintendence of the supplies, and was employed in that business for several weeks.

At length the army marched. Franklin continued to send provisions forward until news came of its defeat. He advanced a large sum of his own money, nearly thirteen

hundred pounds, to facilitate and quicken the procuring of supplies. General Braddock, a few days before the fatal event, sent him back an order on the paymaster for a thousand pounds, leaving the remainder to the next account; but that remainder he never received.

Braddock's defeat is familiar to all readers of the "History of the Seven Years' War," because, amid the horrors of the scene, the alert and youthful figure of Colonel Washington moves conspicuous. Of that long, romantic war, people in general have a vivid recollection of nothing except Wolfe's heroic clamber up the heights of Quebec, and the cool daring and rejected wisdom of Braddock's provincial aide-de-camp. Here it concerns us only to know that, during the panic, the teamsters of Braddock's army did what teamsters always do in a panic, cut the traces, mounted each his swiftest horse, and made all speed for home. In that season of hurry and consternation, it was impossible to procure the settlement of accounts so numerous and complicated as those of the owners of the lost waggons. Franklin being personally bound for them, several of the owners sued him for the amount of their loss, and he saw before him a world of trouble, and possible ruin. Late in October, however, more than three months after the defeat, commissioners were appointed to settle the claims, and Franklin was relieved.

He acquired great credit by his services to Braddock's army. The Assembly of Pennsylvania, without a dissentient voice, gave him a vote of thanks. When Thomas Penn went to the Secretary of State in London, to represent Franklin as a factious and troublesome person, he found that General Braddock had been beforehand with him. "I think with you," wrote Thomas Penn to Governor

Morris, in September 1755, "that Mr Franklin's having signed that vile Report upon our answer to the Address of the Assembly, and printed the Secretary of State's letter contrary to your order, shows plainly he is not to be depended upon to assist in promoting the public service, in a way the most agreeable to the Government. I make no doubt he differs from the Quakers about the Militia Law, but believe he has no great desire to lessen the power of the Assembly. I have mentioned what you say about him to the Secretary of State, who told me General Braddock had represented him as having done considerable services."*

* Pennsylvania Archives, 1748-56.



CHAPTER XV.

GENERAL FRANKLIN IN THE FIELD.—ENGLAND AGAIN.



THE fair province of Pennsylvania, after eighty years of peaceful growth, fell upon evil days. Having enjoyed the fruits of Penn's justice and good sense, she was to endure some of the consequences of his errors ; dissension at the capital, fire and massacre on the border.

As soon as the tidings of Braddock's defeat reached Philadelphia, Governor Morris sent in haste to Franklin and asked his advice. Franklin advised him to write to Colonel Dunbar, then commanding the remnant of Braddock's army, and beg him to post his troops on the frontiers, and keep the enemy in check until re-enforcements could be raised in the colonies, and then march once more upon Fort Duquesne. But nothing could stay the flight of Dunbar and his panic-stricken men, who seem never to have felt themselves quite safe until they had reached Philadelphia.

The disputes and wranglings which had so long distinguished the Assembly of Pennsylvania still prevailed, and the greatest difficulty was experienced by those who were anxiously disposed to organise means of defence against the attacks of the enemy. Summer, and two months of autumn,

were allowed to pass away without any decisive step being taken. The Quakers would not sanction warlike measures; the Assembly would not exempt them from doing duty in times of necessity along with the other inhabitants. In the autumn of 1755 horrible tales of households surprised, of men killed, of women and children carried away captive into the wilderness, were brought to the city by every one that came in from the back country. On one occasion, to rebuke the contending authorities and the non-resisting Quakers, the bodies of a murdered family were brought to Philadelphia, drawn round the city in an open waggon, and then laid out in the street before the State House, a ghastly argument for union and promptitude. Nay, it was said that Berks County was raising an army of two thousand men for the purpose of marching to Philadelphia and compelling the governor and the Assembly to unite for the defence of the province.

But the long repressed energies of the province at length awoke. The governor, the Assembly, the war commissioners, and all the people who were not Quakers, worked together in harmony, and with all their might. "The commissioners," wrote Franklin to a friend, "meet every day, Sundays not excepted." Arms were sent to the frontier. Stockades were built. Provisions were accumulated. Men were drilled.

The grand obstacle to raising volunteers had always been the refusal of the Quakers to bear arms. The ruder provincials could not endure the thought of fighting for men who would not fight for themselves; for men, too, who must necessarily enjoy the fruits of victory. Franklin, however, was man enough to respect even a freak, if it were a freak of conscience, and man-of-the-world enough to know that

when an injustice *cannot* be rectified, it is sometimes best to permit and legitimate it. He now carried a bill through the Assembly for raising volunteers, the preamble of which expressly and honourably exempted Quakers from serving. To render this exemption less unpalatable to the rest of the people, he published, according to a custom of that day, a Dialogue between the worthy citizens, X, Y, and Z. This production was long and ingenious, and is said to have had an immediate and great effect. "For my part," says Z, "I am no coward, but hang me if I fight to save the Quakers." X replies: "That is to say, you will not pump the ship because it will save the rats as well as yourself." "But," continues the still unsatisfied Z, "If this act should prove a good one, *what shall we have to say against the Quakers at the next election?*" To this the patriotic X replies: "Oh, my friends, let us on this occasion cast from us all these little party views, and consider ourselves as Englishmen and Pennsylvanians. Let us think only of the service of our king, the honour and safety of our country, and vengeance on its murdering enemies. If good be done, what imports it by whom it is done? The glory of serving and saving others is superior to the advantage of being served or secured. Let us resolutely and generously unite in our country's cause, in which to die is the sweetest of all deaths; and may the God of armies bless our honest endeavours!" With this burst of generous feeling the Dialogue ends.

Under Franklin's act the provincials rushed to arms, and nothing was heard in Philadelphia but the sound of military preparation. Bad news arrived from the Moravian villages, and Governor Morris asked Franklin to accept a military commission and lead a body of men to Northampton County, erect a line of stockades, and reassure the people.

Franklin accepted the trust. Five hundred and forty volunteers obeyed his call to arms. His son William he named his aide-de-camp, and found him most competent for the post. About the middle of December General Franklin, (for General he was called,) at the head of part of his little army, marched northward.

The inexperienced general, his troops not less inexperienced, marching in the most difficult month of the year through a thinly settled country, had his patience severely tried. The troops were delayed sometimes by lack of indispensable supplies, often by the weather, and often by the roughness of the roads, so that nearly a month elapsed before they arrived at the scene of their intended operations; the most distant point of which was not ninety miles from the city. At Bethlehem, the chief seat of the Moravians, Franklin found that the Brethren, though claiming to be non-resistants, had been induced to fortify their village.

This town being the centre of his operations, he sent out from that village several detachments for the purpose of erecting stockades, and he remained there for several days superintending these movements, and preparing to push forward with the main body to the village of Guadenhutten. His orders to the captains commanding detachments, which were exact and circumstantial, contained this clause: "You are to acquaint the men, that if in their ranging they meet with, or are at any time attacked by the enemy, and kill any of them, forty dollars will be allowed and paid by the Government for each scalp of an Indian enemy so killed, the same being produced with proper attestations."

It was no child's play this expedition. Franklin himself relates an incident which shows that the enemy, though invisible, were near, watchful, and determined. "Just

before we left Bethlehem, eleven farmers, who had been driven from their plantations by the Indians, came to me requesting a supply of fire-arms, that they might go back and bring off their cattle. I gave them each a gun with suitable ammunition. We had not marched many miles before it began to rain, and it continued raining all day; there were no habitations on the road to shelter us till we arrived near night at the house of a German, where, and in his barn, we were all huddled together as wet as water could make us. It was well we were not attacked in our march, for our arms were of the most ordinary sort, and our men could not keep the locks of their guns dry. The Indians are dexterous in contrivances for that purpose, which we had not. They met that day the eleven poor farmers above mentioned, and killed ten of them; the one that escaped informed us that his and his companions' guns would not go off, the priming being wet with the rain."

After a march of great difficulty and hardship the army arrived at Guadenhutten. The next morning, which was Monday, their stockade was marked out, and work upon it begun. On Friday, though the construction had been often interrupted by the rain, the rough log fort was finished, a flag hoisted, a salute fired, and the place named Fort Allen. Two other forts were built in the neighbourhood, and the whole region was thus rendered, for the time, secure against surprise.

When the fort was finished, the general ventured forth, accompanied by small parties, to scour the country. "We met with no Indians," he says, "but we found the places on the neighbouring hills, where they had lain to watch our proceedings. There was an art in their contrivance of those places that seems worth mentioning. It being winter, a fire

was necessary for them ; but a common fire on the surface of the ground would, by its light, have discovered their position at a distance ; they had, therefore, dug holes in the ground, about three feet in diameter, and somewhat deeper ; we found where they had, with their hatchets, cut off the charcoal from the sides of burnt logs lying in the woods. With these coals they had made small fires in the bottom of the holes, and we observed among the weeds and grass the prints of their bodies, made by their lying all round, with their legs hanging down in the holes, to keep their feet warm, which, with them, is an essential point. This kind of fire, so managed, could not discover them, either by its light, flame, sparks, or even smoke."

While Franklin was still busy in completing his three forts, and supplying them with provisions, letters came from Governor Morris, informing him that he was about to summon the Assembly, and asking him to return as soon as the state of the frontier would permit. His own friends in the Assembly, also, pressed him to return. At this time, a New England soldier of experience, one Colonel Clapham, came to visit the site of Guadenhutten, and to him General Franklin offered the command of Fort Allen. Colonel Clapham accepting, Franklin gave him a commission, which he read to the garrison, and having addressed the troops, extolling Colonel Clapham, and exhorting them to vigilance, he set out for Philadelphia. A party escorted him to Bethlehem, where he rested from his unaccustomed labours for several days, and improved the time by studying the Moravian system. "The first night at Bethlehem," he records, "lying in a good bed, I could hardly sleep, it was so different from my hard lodging on the floor of a hut, at Guadenhutten, with only a blanket or two."

He reached Philadelphia about the 10th of February 1756, after two months' service in the field. He was welcomed home with universal applause. The governor went so far to urge him to undertake the reduction of Fort Duquesne, and offered to give him a general's commission for that purpose. This flattering offering he declined, saying that he felt himself incompetent to the task. The military companies of Philadelphia, numbering twelve hundred men, immediately elected him their colonel, and he accepted the honour. A grand parade of these companies, their artillery drawn by "some of the largest and most stately horses in the province," occurred at Philadelphia, a few weeks after his return.

To complete the military part of Franklin's history, it may be proper to add, that one cold day in November 1756, nine months after Franklin had left the frontier, while part of the garrison of Fort Allen were skating on the River Lehigh, a body of Indians rushed upon the fort, killed or captured the inmates, frightened away the skaters, and burnt again the village, as well as the stockade built by Franklin to defend it. Several years, indeed, were yet to elapse before the frontiers of Pennsylvania were safe from the savage foe. But Franklin was called to labour for the defence of the province in other scenes.

In March, Franklin left his home again for an official tour in Maryland and Virginia. This journey lasted three months. He spent two months very agreeably in Virginia, and then went round by sea to New York. Virginia, he wrote, was "a pleasant country, and the people polite and obliging." Of New York he only records, that it "was growing immensely rich by money brought into it from all quarters for the pay and subsistence of the troops." Little

was thought of then in the colonies but the war. Troops were crossing the ocean, and colonial regiments were everywhere forming to co-operate with them. Lord Loudoun, recently named commander-in-chief for America, was daily expected to arrive at New York. Colonel Washington, commanding the forces of Virginia, was again in the field. He wrote occasionally to Franklin on business of the post-office. From one of Franklin's replies we learn that the Indians were once more ravaging the frontiers of Pennsylvania.

Returning home about the first of July, Franklin found every one anxious for the safety of the province ; but, the new governor not having arrived, nothing could be done. Six weeks after, he wrote : " Our frontiers are greatly distressed. . . . The Assembly are met, and in a very good disposition towards the service ; but the new governor being hourly expected, nothing can be done till his arrival." The governor had landed, however, and reached Philadelphia a few hours after these words were written. On the 19th of August 1756, Mr Robert Morris ceased to be governor of Pennsylvania, and Captain William Denny ruled in his stead.

Most joyful was his welcome to the city. " The whole province," wrote William Franklin, " seemed to feel itself relieved by the alteration of one name for another. Hope persuaded them to believe that the good qualities of the man would qualify the governor. He was received like a deliverer. The officious proprietary, mayor and corporation made a feast for his entertainment ; and, having invited the Assembly to partake of it, they also were pleased to become forgetful enough to be of the party."

At this banquet, after the removal of the cloth, Governor Denny rose and presented to Franklin, with a compli-

mentary speech, a medal voted him by the Royal Society of London. While the company were making merry over their wine, Governor Denny took Franklin aside into an adjoining room, and endeavoured by flattery and promises to win him over to the views of the proprietaries. "He said much to me," reports Franklin, "of the proprietor's good disposition towards the province, and of the advantage it would be to us all, and to me in particular, if the opposition that had been so long continued to his measures was dropped, and harmony restored between him and the people, in effecting which it was thought no one could be more serviceable than myself; and I might depend on adequate acknowledgments and recompenses. The drinkers, finding we did not return immediately to the table, sent us a decanter of Madeira, which the governor made liberal use of, and, in proportion, became more profuse of his solicitations and promises."✱

Franklin replied, that his circumstances, thank God, were such as to render the favours of the proprietor unnecessary to him, and, being a member of the Assembly, he could not lawfully accept anything the proprietor had to bestow. He would do everything in his power to render the administration of Governor Denny easy and agreeable; but, at the same time, he hoped "he had not brought the same unfortunate instructions his predecessors had been hampered with." To this observation the new governor made no reply. His silence, however, on a point so important did not alarm the Assembly, for they unanimously voted him a welcoming address, and a grant of six hundred pounds towards his support. They were tired of opposition, says William Franklin, and were pleased to find some pretence for relenting.

Brief indeed was this lull in the storm. The very first communication of Governor Denny to the House betrayed to the experienced members that he was but "a governor in shackles," as Governor Morris had been before him. He was induced, ere long, to exhibit some articles of his instructions; and it then appeared, that on the three vital subjects of the excise, the emission of paper money, and the taxation of the proprietary estates, he had been explicitly instructed.

The Assembly and the governor could agree upon nothing. If the Assembly adjourned, they met only to renew the struggle. Franklin, the spokesman of the popular party, was one of the few men in the House who remained in good humour, and on good terms with the hapless governor.

The autumn of 1756 was a busy one for Franklin. That the affairs of the public did not quite absorb his mind, we perceive from one of his letters from London of this time, acknowledging the receipt of twenty guineas, which he had sent as a gift to the London Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. The Society elected him a corresponding member, and "earnestly desired his correspondence, information, and advice." In November, we find him again on the frontier, accompanying Governor Denny to a conference with the Indians, and listening, day after day, to tedious and fruitless "Talks," as such conferences were called by the Indians.

At the regular December session of the Assembly, 1756, the dispute with the governor reached a crisis, the patience of the Assembly, long tried, being at last exhausted. The treasury was empty. The frontiers were ill-protected. The enemy was more audacious than ever. Never had there

been such need of united and energetic effort. The patriotic Assembly, feeling for the sore distress of the outlying settlements, and longing to do their part for king and country, resolved to raise money by an excise upon wine, beer, and spirituous liquors. Accordingly, they sent up to the governor an act, entitled, "An act for striking the sum of sixty thousand pounds in bills of credit, and giving the same to the king's use, and for providing a fund to sink the bills so to be emitted, by laying an excise upon wine, rum, brandy, and other spirits." The excise was to continue twenty years.

This bill the Assembly had reason to suppose unobjectionable, since its passage involved no principle heretofore contested. The governor, however, refused his assent. His *instructions*, he said, forbade his passing such a bill. The amount of money was too great; the term of twenty years was too long; and various minor details of the bill were not what they should be. There were conferences between the governor and a committee of the House, but all attempts at accommodation were frustrated by the inexorable *instructions*. If the committee demonstrated the absolute necessity of a clause of the bill, the governor could only reply that his instructions expressly and positively forbade it. At length, the bill was returned to the House, with a message of ten lines, in which the governor declared that "he would not give his consent to it; and, there being no person to judge between the governor and the House in these parts, he would immediately transmit to his Majesty his reasons for so doing."

On the third day after the receipt of this haughty message from the governor, the Assembly, having considered the objections to the bill, passed a series of resolutions, solemnly

protesting against the veto, but concluding with this: "The House, therefore, reserving their rights in their full extent on all future occasions, and protesting against the proprietary instructions and prohibitions, do, nevertheless, in duty to the king, and compassion for the suffering inhabitants of their distressed country, and in humble but full confidence of the justice of his Majesty and a British Parliament, waive their rights on this present occasion only; and do further resolve, that a new bill be brought in for granting a sum of money to the king's use, and that the same be made conformable to the said instructions."

As soon as this urgent business had been disposed of, the House resolved to follow the example of the governor, and appeal to the king. "It was highly necessary," ran the resolution, "that a remonstrance should be drawn up and sent home, setting forth the true state of Pennsylvania, and representing the pernicious consequences to the British interest, and to the inhabitants of that province, if, contrary to their charters and laws, they were to be governed by proprietary instructions." But this was not all. The Assembly further resolved, that the two most honoured members of their House, the speaker, Isaac Norris, a gentleman who had grown gray in the service of the province, and Benjamin Franklin, should be requested to go to England, commissioned by the Assembly to urge and procure the redress of their grievances.

The speaker, on account of age and ill health, declined the duty, and the House then resolved, that "Benjamin Franklin be, and he is hereby appointed agent of this province, to solicit and transact the affairs thereof in Great Britain;" and, a few days after, "that William Franklin have leave to resign his office of clerk of this House, that

he may accompany his father, appointed one of the commissioners to negotiate our affairs in England, and that another person be chosen to serve as clerk during the absence of the said Franklin."

To defray the expenses of the voyage, and of a residence in London, the Assembly voted the sum of fifteen hundred pounds. As the commissioner expected to finish the business in a few months this provision he considered sufficient.

The preparations for the voyage were soon completed. Passage was engaged for father and son in a New York packet ship, and their stores were embarked. A few days before the time fixed for their departure, Lord Loudoun arrived at Philadelphia, having come from New York, as he said, for the purpose of attempting an accommodation between the governor and the Assembly, in order that the king's service might be no longer obstructed by their dissensions. Hoping much from the interposition of this important personage, Franklin deferred his departure, and the packet sailed without him. After a long delay, and repeated disappointments, arrangements were completed which enabled the two Franklins to proceed to England. They sailed from New York in a small packet, and, after a long and dangerous voyage, arrived safely at Falmouth, Cornwall.

Father and son posted to London; the ride to which then occupied many days. They arrived at the hospitable house of Peter Collinson in London, late in the evening of July 26, 1757. They were very comfortably situated at Collinson's house, and remained there several days, during which they were visited by several eminent electricians and members of the Royal Society, who had hastened to offer their congratulations to the American philosopher. James

Ralph soon presented himself, heard tidings of his abandoned relatives in Philadelphia, and related to his old friend the long story of his own adventures. Dr Fothergill called to welcome to England the man whom he had made known to Europe. Governor Shirley, of Massachusetts, renewed his friendship with Franklin. Mr Strahan, the great bookseller, Johnson's friend, for many years Franklin's correspondent, called at Mr Collinson's, and seems to have fallen in love with Franklin at first sight. Congratulatory letters from electricians of France, Germany, Holland, and Italy, reached him in due time. He made haste to visit Dr Canton, the first Englishman who had succeeded in drawing electricity from the clouds, and who had been, from the beginning, a staunch defender of the Franklinian theory. We are told, too, that he went to the old printing-house in Wild Court, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he had last worked in London, and going to a particular press, said to the two men at work upon it: "Come, my friends, we will drink together; it is now forty years since I worked like you at this press as a journeyman printer." So saying, he sent for a gallon of beer, and gave the toast, "Success to printing;" a performance not very consistent with his denunciations of beer in the same office thirty-three years before.

He was soon established in lodgings at Craven Street, Strand, a fashionable little street in those days. His landlady was Mrs Margaret Stevenson, one of the most amiable of women, with whom and her daughter he soon contracted a friendship which was warmly cherished on both sides as long as he lived. He lived in a style of considerable liberality in London. He had brought with them a servant from Philadelphia, and a negro for his son. Finding the

hackney coaches of London exceedingly dilapidated and inconvenient, he set up a modest chariot of his own, that the representative of Pennsylvania might be able to present himself becomingly at the doors of ministers and members of Parliament. His son William entered the Middle Temple, and was soon deep in the study of the law, intending to return to Philadelphia a barrister.

Franklin entered at once upon the business of his agency. His first step was to obtain an interview with the Messrs Penn, and lay before them the grievances of the Assembly. He argued the matter with them in the most candid and conciliatory spirit, hoping to show them how much it was for their interest to deal justly with Pennsylvania. He soon perceived that their minds were steeled against him and his cause. They were haughty and reserved. They evaded and quibbled. He had with him a short paper or memorandum, entitled, "Heads of Complaint," which appears to have been drawn up as a guide to himself in his conversation with them. This paper Franklin handed to the gentlemen. They chose to consider it highly disrespectful; they said it was very brief; it was vague; it related no instances; it was neither dated, signed, nor addressed. Franklin signed the paper, and appended the date of August 20th, 1757. The gentlemen still affected not to know what the paper meant, nor what the Assembly wanted. They said, that in order to arrive at an understanding of the matter, it would be necessary for them to examine the recent acts of the Assembly, which would be a work of time. Meanwhile, would Mr Franklin draw up a supply bill such as the Assembly *would* approve, so that they might perceive the precise aim and desire of the Assembly? Mr Franklin would not; he had no authority

to do anything of the kind. Mr Thomas Penn regretted that the powers of the agent were so limited. The long vacation, he added, was just begun; the lawyers were all out of town, without whose advice they could not think of acting in so important an affair. When the lawyers returned they would lay the matter before them for their opinion.

From all of which the agent inferred that the proprietaries meant to oppose him by every means in their power, and that if he succeeded in his mission, it could only be after a hard-fought battle. He sought the proprietaries no more, but directed all his energies to winning over those with whom the final decision must rest, the Lords of Trade, and the members of the king's council.

He engaged the services of leading counsel, who rendered valuable aid at a later period of the controversy. He heard, meanwhile, nothing from the proprietaries or their lawyers. Twelve months elapsed before any reply was vouchsafed to his "Heads of Complaint." They then replied, at considerable length, and with much show of care and elaboration, not to Franklin, but to the Assembly, transmitting the document directly to Governor Denny. This paper denied everything, conceded nothing, and concluded with sundry reflections upon Franklin; intimating that everything could, probably, be arranged between the Assembly and the proprietaries, if the Assembly would only select, as their representatives, "cool and temperate persons," "persons of candour;" fully empowered to draw up Supply Bills, and engage the Assembly to pass them.

The agent, meanwhile, was flying at higher game. The king in council was to be the final judge between the Assembly and the proprietaries.

Franklin and his son prepared a complete history of the controversy between the Assembly and the governors, from the time of William Penn to that of Governor Denny. William Franklin, who, in his place as clerk of the Assembly, had listened to the debates for seven years, and had thus acquired a perfect knowledge of the subject, was the writer of this work, his father supplying reminiscences, suggestions, documents, and all other needful aid. This voluminous work was executed with some ability, though in great haste.

This "Historical Review" attracted attention in England, and greatly influenced opinion. Franklin took care that copies should reach the hands of every man in England and in America, whose good opinion could forward, or whose ill opinion could hinder, his cause. He sent to his partner, Mr David Hall, five hundred copies for sale and distribution in Pennsylvania, twenty-five copies to his nephew, Mecom, in Boston, and twenty-five to his old partner, Mr James Parker, in New York—booksellers all of them.

Such were his official labours during the first years of his residence in England. The slow progress of his affair left him abundant leisure for the enjoyment of society, and no man was better fitted than he either to enjoy society or contribute to its enjoyment. Electricity was still a favourite branch of natural science with him. He set up his apparatus in Craven Street, and entertained his friends almost daily with brilliant experiments.

How heartily he enjoyed the society of literary and learned men, his letters still pleasantly reveal to us. The Franklin of 1759, we must note, was, in some particulars, a very different person from the Franklin of 1724, or even the Franklin of 1744. His figure had become that of a thriv-

ing Englishman of fifty-three years, portly, though far from corpulent. He was fonder of his ease than formerly, not disinclined to sit after dinner, and perfectly capable of finishing his second bottle of claret, though better pleased with his usual very moderate allowance. In general society not talkative, often taciturn; among his intimates, very gay, witty, happy, and simple, always ready with sense, fact, or repartee, as the moment demanded. "I find," he wrote about this time, "that I love company, chat, a laugh, a glass, and even a song, as well as ever; and at the same time relish better than I used to do the grave observations and wise sentences of old men's conversation."

The leading traits of his character never changed; least of all, his desire to effect improvements. He wished very much to improve the smoky street lamps of dismal London, and he actually did draw up a plan for having the streets of the city swept before business hours in the morning. "An accidental occurrence," he relates, "had instructed me how much sweeping might be done in a little time. I found at my door in Craven Street, one morning, a poor woman sweeping my pavement with a birch broom; she appeared very pale and feeble, as just come out of a fit of sickness. I asked who employed her to sweep there; she said, 'Nobody, but I am poor and in distress, and I sweeps before gentlefolks doors, and hopes they will give me something.' I bid her sweep the whole street clean, and I would give her a shilling; this was at nine o'clock; at noon she came for the shilling. From the slowness I saw at first in her working, I could scarce believe that the work was done so soon, and sent my servant to examine it, who reported that the whole street was swept perfectly clean, and all the dust placed in the gutter, which was in the middle; and the

next rain washed it quite away, so that the pavement, and even the kennel, were perfectly clean."

His plan was submitted to Dr Fothergill, but had no immediate results. People at that day submitted to the ten thousand nuisances of a city as to the inevitable decrees of fate. Sir John Fielding demonstrated to Mr Grenville, when he was prime minister, that a mounted night police, twenty-four in number, would clear London and its environs of highwaymen; but, thirty years after, ladies continued to be robbed on their return from the opera; to say nothing of Holborn Hill and Hounslow Heath. Franklin felt it necessary to apologise, as it were, to posterity, for troubling himself about such a trifle as the health and comfort of half a million human beings. "Some," he writes, "may think these trifling matters not worth minding or relating; but when they consider, that though dust blown into the eyes of a single person, or into a single shop, on a windy day, is of but small importance, yet that the great number of instances in a populous city, and its frequent repetition, gives it weight and consequence, perhaps they will not censure very severely those who bestow some attention to affairs of this seemingly low nature. Human felicity is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day. Thus, if you teach a poor young man to shave himself, and keep his razor in order, you may contribute more to the happiness of his life than in giving him a thousand guineas."

Every summer during his stay in England, Franklin, accompanied by his son, spent a few weeks in travelling. A most agreeable tour was that of 1758, when he visited the University of Cambridge, and received the most flattering

attention from the chancellor, the vice-chancellor, and the heads of the colleges.

From Cambridge he went to the counties where his ancestors had lived, and sought out living relations of his own and of his wife. He found at Wellingborough a female cousin, so aged that she could distinctly remember his father's leaving England for America seventy-three years before. She received her American relative with hearty welcome, old as she was. He discovered another cousin, a happy and venerable old maid, "a good, clever woman," he wrote, "but poor, though vastly contented with her situation, and very cheerful." She gave him some of his uncle Benjamin's old letters to read, with their pious rhymings and acrostics, in which occurred allusions to himself and his sister Jane when they were children. Continuing their journey, father and son reached Ecton, where so many successive Franklins had plied the blacksmith's hammer. They found that the farm of thirty acres had been sold to strangers. The old stone cottage of their ancestors was used for a school, but was still called the Franklin House. Many relations and connexions they hunted up, most of them old and poor, but endowed with the inestimable gift of making the best of their lot. They copied tombstones; they examined the parish register; they heard the chime of bells play which Uncle Thomas had caused to be purchased for the quaint old Ecton church seventy years before; and examined other evidences of his worth and public spirit. Having paid due honour to the memorials of their race, not neglecting to visit many lowly connexions of Mrs Franklin, they returned to London.

Pleasures of another kind filled their next vacation, when they spent six weeks in Scotland. In the spring of 1759

Franklin acquired the title, by which he has ever since been called, that of Doctor, conferred upon him by the University of St Andrews. Perhaps it was in acknowledgment of this compliment that he set his face northward in the summer of the same year. Scotland did him great honour on this occasion. Her Universities received him with distinction, the corporation of Edinburgh gave him the freedom of their city, society opened its drawing-rooms to him, and men of letters sought his acquaintance. Hume, Robertson, and Lord Kames were his chief associates, and he long enjoyed their intimate friendship. A trifling remark which he once chanced to make to Dr Robertson, is supposed by some to have suggested the well-known Macaulayan image of the New Zealander sitting upon an arch of London Bridge contemplating the ruins of St Paul's. "Dr Robertson, the historian, told me," says Horace Walpole, "that he knew Franklin well, who had been thrice in Scotland several years ago. Being once at Scone, and told it was there the old Scottish kings had used to be crowned, Franklin said, 'Who knows but St James's may, some time or other, lie in ruins as Scone does now?'"

Amid this holiday life Franklin's heart was, after all, at his Philadelphia home. "The regard and friendship," he wrote to his wife, "I meet with from persons of worth, and the conversation of ingenious men, give me no small pleasure; but, at this time of life, domestic comforts afford the most solid satisfaction, and my uneasiness at being absent from my family, and longing desire to be with them, make me often sigh in the midst of cheerful company."

Mrs Franklin, on her part, wrote so frequently that Franklin declared no man before was ever blessed with so punctual a correspondent, and it was of no use for him to

try to keep even with her. She sent him over a curious piece of intelligence in 1758, that a rumour was spread all over the colonies of his having been made a baronet, and Governor of Pennsylvania.

Though this rumour proved false, Mrs Franklin had proof enough that her husband was well-esteemed in England. Mr Strahan the publisher wrote to her, entreating her to join her husband, that both might end their days in London, and he enjoy still the charms of her husband's conversation. He said he had formed a high opinion of Mr Franklin from his letters and his reputation, but the man himself far surpassed his expectation. "For my own part," he added, "I never saw a man who was in every respect so perfectly agreeable to me. Some are amiable in one view, some in another, he in all." Mr Strahan had other hopes, which he delicately hinted. "Your son," he continued, "I really think one of the prettiest young gentlemen I ever knew from America. He seems to me to have a solidity of judgment not very often to be met with in one of his years. This, with the daily opportunities he has of improving himself in the company of his father, who is at the same time his friend, his brother, his intimate and easy companion, affords an agreeable prospect that your husband's virtues and usefulness to his country may be prolonged beyond the date of his own life. Your daughter (I wish I could call her mine) I find by the reports of all who know her, is a very amiable girl in all respects; but of her I shall say nothing till I have the pleasure of seeing her. Only I must observe to you, that being the mistress of such a family is a degree of happiness, perhaps, the greatest that falls to the lot of humanity." In a later epistle, Mr Strahan made a formal request of the hand of Miss Franklin for his son.

Mrs Franklin was unmoved by these letters, as her husband told Mr Strahan she would be. "Mr Strahan," he wrote, "has offered to lay me a considerable wager, that a letter he has wrote to you will bring you immediately over hither : but I tell him I will not pick his pocket ; for I am sure there is no inducement strong enough to prevail with you to cross the seas."

So passed three years of Franklin's residence in England, the tedium of delay being alleviated by congenial society, experiments in natural philosophy, music, the theatre, and annual excursions into the country. In the summer of 1760 the cause he had come to promote was ripe for adjudication.


Franklin's success in the matter was only partial. He confined his attention to the gaining of two points—the equal taxation of the proprietary estates, and the deliverance of the Assembly from the tyranny of proprietary instructions.

The stipulations of Franklin were certainly a compromise to what he ought to have insisted upon ; but, under all circumstances, this compromise was equivalent to a victory. Besides saving Pennsylvania from the financial embarrassments which would have resulted from the repeal of a money bill that had been a year in operation, he established the principle that the proprietary estates were to contribute their just proportion of the public revenue. His success also notified the Penn party that their instructions were not the supreme law of Pennsylvania, and that even in the council-chamber of the king other rights than those of prerogative could sometimes find protection.

It must not be supposed that Franklin's conduct in England was universally approved in Pennsylvania. It was

heartily approved by his own party, which was a majority of the people of the province. But there are reasons for concluding that the proprietary party gained both in numbers and in confidence during his absence from home. He was assailed, it seems, in many a paragraph and pamphlet; so that Mrs Franklin, being accustomed to hearing her husband praised, was amazed and pained, and wrote to him in some alarm. He reassured her in his simple, homely way: "I am concerned that so much trouble should be given you by idle reports concerning me. Be satisfied, my dear, that while I have my senses, and God vouchsafes me His protection, I shall do nothing unworthy the character of an honest man, and one that loves his family." And, in another letter: "Let no one make you uneasy with their idle or malicious scribblings, but enjoy yourself and friends, and the comforts of life that God has bestowed on you, with a cheerful heart. I am glad their pamphlets give you so little concern. I make no other answer to them at present than what appears in the seal of this letter;"—a dove on a coiled serpent, with the motto, *Innocence surmonte tout*.

These words were doubtless consoling to the lady, who was much cast down at her husband's long absence. The chief object of his mission having been attained, she expected him home before the year ended. Other Pennsylvanian business, however, detained him in London till the winter set in; and in winter no one at that period put to sea who could conveniently remain on shore. The year following, public and private business still kept him busy in England.



CHAPTER XVI.

HOME AGAIN, AND RETURN TO ENGLAND.



THE greater part of the year 1762 was spent by Dr Franklin in merely getting home. He began to get ready to leave London early in the spring. He reached Philadelphia late in the autumn. Some pleasing events, however, occurred to alleviate the tedium of delay, and to show him that his friends and the friends of science in the Old World were as sorry to let him go as those in the New World were glad to get him back.

Oxford paid him a parting compliment. According to the records of that University, it was "agreed, *nem. con.*, (February 22, 1762,) at a meeting of the Heads of the Houses, that Mr Franklin, whenever he shall please to visit the University, shall be offered the compliment of the degree of D.C.L., *honoris causâ*." A month later, Mr Franklin, accompanied by his son, visited the University, when he received the offered degree, and thus became twice a doctor. On the same occasion, the University conferred upon his son the degree of Master of Arts.

May, June, July, and the greater part of August passed, and he was still waiting for the departure of the fleet, in a vessel of which he was to sail for America. At length all was ready, the fleet set sail, and Dr Franklin bade farewell

to the land of his forefathers. They had a pleasant run to the island of Madeira, where they remained several days, and obtained a great supply of fruits and fresh provisions. Leaving the island, they were wafted toward the American coast by the trade-winds in the most agreeable manner. "The weather was so favourable," he wrote, "that there were few days in which we could not visit from ship to ship, dining with each other, and on board of the man-of-war ; which made the time pass agreeably, much more so than when one goes in a single ship ; for this was like travelling in a moving village, with all one's neighbours about one." Various philosophical experiments, and the observation of the thousand mysterious phenomenon of the sea, wiled away the time.

During the voyage, he had the pleasure of reading his friend Lord Kames's work, "The Elements of Criticism." The reading of this work called forth the letter to the author, in which occurs Franklin's most ingenious discourse upon the ancient Scotch melodies, and the reason why they are so pleasing. Lord Kames remarks that "melody and harmony are separately agreeable, and in *union delightful*." Franklin observed that that was the reason why the Scotch tunes had lived so long, and would live for ever, if they were not stifled in modern ornaments. He explained his meaning thus : "An agreeable *succession* of sounds is called *melody*, and only the *co-existence* of agreeable sounds, *harmony*. But, since the memory is capable of retaining for some moments a perfect idea of the pitch of a past sound, so as to compare with it the pitch of a succeeding sound, and judge truly of their agreement or disagreement, there may and does arise from thence a sense of harmony between *the present and past sounds, equally pleasing with that between*

two present sounds. The Scotch melodies were composed by the minstrels of those days, to be played on the harp, accompanied by the voice. The harp was strung with wire, which gives a sound of long continuance, and had no contrivance like that in the modern harpsichord, by which the sound of the preceding could be stopped the moment a succeeding note began. To avoid actual discord, it was therefore necessary that *the succeeding emphatic note should be a chord with the preceding, as their sounds must exist at the same time.* Hence arose that beauty in those tunes that has so long pleased, and will please for ever, though men scarce know why."

One of his philosophical experiments, which showed his dexterity of hand, as well as the darting activity of his mind, requires brief notice. "During our passage to Madeira," he wrote to one of his Scotch friends, "the weather being warm, and the cabin windows constantly open for the benefit of the air, the candles at night flared and run very much, which was an inconvenience. At Madeira we got oil to burn, and with a common glass tumbler or beaker, slung in wire, and suspended to the ceiling of the cabin, and a little wire hoop for the wick, furnished with corks to float on the oil, I made an Italian lamp, that gave us very good light all over the table. The glass at bottom contained water to about one-third of its height; another third was taken up with oil; the rest was left empty, that the sides of the glass might protect the flame from the wind. There is nothing remarkable in all this; but what follows is particular. At supper, looking on the lamp, I remarked, that though the surface of the oil was perfectly tranquil, and duly preserved its position and distance with regard to the brim of the glass, the water under the oil was in great com-

motion, rising and falling in irregular waves, which continued during the whole evening. The lamp was kept burning as a watch-light all night, till the oil was spent, and the water only remained. In the morning I observed, that though the motion of the ship continued the same, the water was now quiet, and its surface as tranquil as that of the oil had been the evening before. At night again, when oil was put upon it, the water resumed its irregular motions, rising in high waves almost to the surface of the oil, but without disturbing the smooth level of that surface. And this was repeated every day during the voyage."

In the ninth week after leaving Portsmouth, he trod once more his native land. His return home was joyous and triumphant. To Lord Kames he writes:—"On the 1st of November, I arrived safe and well at my own home, after an absence of near six years, found my wife and daughter well; the latter grown quite a woman, with many amiable accomplishments acquired in my absence; and my friends as hearty and affectionate as ever, with whom my house was filled for many days, to congratulate me on my return. I had been chosen yearly during my absence to represent the city of Philadelphia in our provincial Assembly; and, on my appearance in the House, they voted me three thousand pounds sterling for my services in England, and their thanks, delivered by the Speaker. In February following, my son arrived with my new daughter; for, with my consent and approbation, he married soon after I left England a very agreeable West India lady, with whom he is very happy. I accompanied him to his government, where he met with the kindest reception from the people of all ranks, and has lived with them ever since in the greatest harmony. A river only parts that province and ours, and

his residence is within seventeen miles of me, so that we frequently see each other."

He soon fell into the old routine. In the early summer of the following year he completed the reunion with his friends and country, by making a post-office tour of sixteen hundred miles. He was accompanied by his daughter.

Dr Franklin having served the public for fifteen years, and reached the ease-loving age of fifty-seven, was now well inclined to enter upon the life of studious leisure which he had promised himself on retiring from business in 1748. He meant to build a house more spacious and convenient than any he had yet inhabited, in which he would entertain his friends, make philosophical experiments, compose his "Art of Virtue," and spend the evening of his life in tranquillity. It was a dream never to be realised. Again he was caught in the rush of unexpected events, and borne far enough from the way of life he had proposed.

The peace of Paris, which terminated the Seven Years War, was signed on the 10th of February 1763; and once more there was peace in Europe, and safety on the ocean. But not in America. In making the peace of Paris, one of the belligerent powers had not been consulted, namely, the North American Indians. Blood and plunder were as alluring to them after the peace as before; and all along the back settlements of the colonies, from Niagara to Florida, villages were still burned, families murdered, farms laid waste, and women and children carried into captivity.

Pennsylvania suffered most. This year, from early spring to early winter, the western parts of this province were ravaged by hostile Indians. All the churches in Philadelphia made collections for the relief of the families driven from their homes. Christ Church, as we learn from the

minutes of the vestry, raised £662 for this purpose in 1763, and sent out a missionary to expend it to the best advantage. He reported seven hundred and fifty abandoned farms, and two hundred women and children fled to Fort Pitt. The same liberal church sent for distribution in the western counties, besides the money, two chests of arms, half a barrel of powder, four hundred pounds of lead, two hundred bullets, and a hundred flints. All the Pennsylvanian records of this year, whether of church or state, are filled with evidences of the terror and desolation which came upon the province immediately after the conclusion of the peace of Paris.

There was, also, another change of Governors in Pennsylvania. Governor Hamilton resigned, and Mr John Penn arrived from England to take his place. As usual, the new Governor was received with joyful welcome, and with more joy than usual, for the appointment of a Penn was regarded as a peace-offering from the proprietaries. It was, also, presumed that they would not think it necessary to tie the hands of so near a relative with rigid instructions. Governor Penn summoned the Assembly. His first address was as conciliatory as could be desired. The House responded with words equally polite, and with a grant of six hundred pounds towards his first year's support. A bill was passed for raising and equipping a thousand men to go against the murderous Indians in the western counties. The House then adjourned to meet again in regular session a few weeks later.

The Indian ravages continued until every white man in Pennsylvania loathed the name of Indian. Among some of the religious sects, particularly the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the western counties, the fatal opinion arose,

that the Quaker policy toward the Indians had been impiously wrong, and that these late murders and burnings were the vengeance of an angry Deity for the offence of not utterly destroying a heathen race. In December of this year, a deed was done in Pennsylvania, by a party of white Christians, so bloody and savage, that the tale still astonishes those who read it as much as it shocks them. Near Lancaster there lived the poor remnant of a once powerful tribe, one of those tribes which had made the original treaty with William Penn, and had lived in perfect peace with the white man ever since. They were now reduced to twenty persons—seven men, five women, and eight children. All of the twenty were harmless, virtuous people, bore English names, and lived in harmony with their white neighbours. December 14th, a party of horsemen from the Scotch-Irish district of Paxton, well-mounted, heavily armed, surrounded the little village of huts at dawn of day, killed and scalped every creature in it, and burned the village to the ground. It happened that but six of the inhabitants of the village were at home that morning. The other fourteen were collected by the magistrates of the vicinity, and placed for safety in the Lancaster workhouse: that being the strongest building in the town. Two weeks after, the same party of horsemen surrounded the workhouse, forced an entrance, and proceeded to the completion of their bloody task. A scene shocking beyond description ensued. “When the poor wretches saw they had no protection nigh, nor could possibly escape, and being without the least weapon for defence, they divided into their little families, the children clinging to the parents; they fell on their knees, protested their innocence, declared their love to the English, and that in their whole lives they

had never done them injury ; and in this posture they all received the hatchet !”

This massacre of inoffensive Indians—so morbid had the public opinion of Pennsylvania become, through terror and irreligious conceptions of the Creator—was but coldly disapproved by the people of the province ; while a powerful party applauded it as an acceptable deed. Consequently, the efforts of the magistrates to discover the perpetrators were fruitless. A proclamation issued by the Governor produced no effect, and the feeling seemed general to excuse the murderers, as men who had been maddened by the murder of their neighbours and relatives.

Ashamed that his Pennsylvania should seem to permit so foul an act, Franklin wrote a generous, eloquent pamphlet, designed to bring the people to a sense of its mean atrocity. He told the story of the murder in plain, cool language, describing the harmless character of the poor Indians, and giving their names and ages. He pictured the horrid scene of the second massacre. He touched upon the deep impiety of seeking to justify such an act by the pretended sanction of a beneficent God. From history, from heroic romance and poetry, he selected examples of the magnanimous forgiveness of a submissive foe, of noble hospitality bestowed upon the helpless, of good deeds done to those who had not deserved, and who could never requite them. He finished his pamphlet by an appeal to the better feelings of his countrymen, that was earnest almost to passion.

This production, its author mentions, “produced a good effect ;” but it did not touch the murderers nor their irreligious abettors. A hundred and forty friendly Indians, converts of the good Moravians, fearing to share the fate of their countrymen, sought refuge in Philadelphia, where they

were sheltered and provided for. Their pastor, a Moravian missionary, accompanied them to the city, and lived with them there, holding daily religious services in the Moravian manner. The Paxton fanatics, to the number of several hundreds, armed with hatchets and rifles, clad in hunting shirts, and prating of Joshua and an avenging God, set out in two bodies for Philadelphia, avowing and proclaiming their purpose to kill these Indians. Philadelphia was in consternation. Governor Penn was at his wits' end. Like many previous governors of Pennsylvania, his first thought in time of trouble was to fly for help to Franklin. On this occasion he made the house of Dr Franklin his head-quarters, and concerted measures with him from hour to hour. Once more Franklin formed an association for the defence of the city; and again he figured as the non-commissioned colonel of an extemporised regiment of a thousand men. "Governor Penn," he humorously says, "did everything by my advice; so that, for about forty-eight hours, I was a very great man, as I had been once some years before, in a time of public danger."

The Paxton band, meanwhile, had reached Germantown, only seven miles from the city. At the request of the governor and council, Dr Franklin and three other gentlemen rode out to Germantown to confer with the insurgents. The new regiment of volunteers remained under arms in the city; and a body of king's troops had been marched in to aid them. The barracks in which the poor Indians were sheltered, with their Moravian pastor, were surrounded with entrenchments, at which young Quakers who would not bear arms still worked, as they had been working night and day. The city was in extreme terror. Dr Franklin, however, succeeded in convincing the Paxton leaders that the

Indians were too well defended to be taken. Or, to use his own language, "the fighting face we put on, and the reasonings we used with the insurgents, having turned them back and restored quiet to the city, I became a less man than ever; for I had, by this transaction, made myself many enemies among the populace."

But now this Governor John Penn began to show his true character. A few weeks after the events just related, he put his hand to a proclamation the most infamous ever signed by an American Governor, designed to flatter and gratify the Paxton party. This proclamation offered the following bounties:—"For every captive male Indian of any hostile tribe, one hundred and fifty dollars; for every female captive, one hundred and thirty-eight dollars; for the scalp of a male Indian, one hundred and thirty-four dollars; *for the scalp of a female Indian, fifty dollars!*"

In the beginning of 1764 there was thus formed a strange coalition against Franklin—the aristocratic partisans of the Penn family, and the ignorant fanatics who approved the massacre of the friendly Indians.

Many months passed before it was considered safe to let the Moravian Indians leave the city.

The rational hope which the Assembly had indulged, that the new Governor would refrain from that interference with legislation which had kept the province in a broil for twenty years, was soon dissipated. Fruitless of the results expected was Franklin's partial triumph at the English court. At the regular session of the Assembly, early in 1764, Governor Penn refused his assent to two bills most essential to the peace of the province. One was a militia bill drawn up by Franklin, which contained a provision for giving the members of each company a voice in the elec-

tion of its officers, and the subalterns a voice in the electing of the major, lieutenant-colonel, and colonel. Governor Penn refused to sign the bill unless this clause were stricken out, and himself invested with the power of appointing all the officers. He demanded, also, that the fines imposed by the bill for military offences should be trebled in amount, and the offenders tried by court-martial, instead of by a court and jury, as the bill provided. The second bill vetoed was an act for raising fifty thousand pounds to defray the expense of the coming campaign against the Indians.

What followed these vetoes has been related by Franklin with peculiar force. "Never," he says, "did any administration open with a more promising prospect than this of Governor Penn. . . . But when it was found that those mischievous instructions still subsisted, and were even further extended; when the Governor began, unprovoked, to send the House affronting messages, seizing every imaginary occasion of reflecting on their conduct; when every other symptom appeared of fixed, deep-rooted, family malice, which could but a little while bear the unnatural covering that had been thrown over it; what wonder is it, if all the old wounds broke out and bled afresh; if all the old grievances, still unredressed, were recollected; if despair succeeded of seeing any peace with a family that could make such returns to all their overtures of kindness?

"They, therefore, after a thorough debate, and making no less than twenty-five unanimous resolves, expressing the many grievances this province had long laboured under through the proprietary government, came to the following resolution—viz.: 'Resolved, *nem. con.*, that this House will adjourn, in order to consult their constituents, whether a humble address should be drawn up and transmitted to his

Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to take the people of this province under his immediate protection and government, by completing the agreement heretofore made with the first proprietary for the sale of the government to the Crown, or otherwise, as to his wisdom and goodness shall seem meet.’”

This adjournment occurred on the 20th of March. There was an interval of seven weeks before the Assembly again came together; during which, I need scarcely say, the two parties bestirred themselves mightily. Franklin published a vigorous pamphlet, entitled, “Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of our Public Affairs, addressed to a Friend in the Country;” in which the most was made of the argument against the proprietary government. Meetings were held in many townships, and there was a great signing of petitions in all parts of the province. When the legislature reassembled on the 14th of May, three thousand names were found appended to the various petitions for a change of government, and not three hundred to those of a contrary tenor. There could be no mistaking the desire of the people. After a long and warm debate, the resolution to petition the king to convert Pennsylvania into a royal province was carried by a large majority.

Mr Isaac Norris, the venerable Speaker of the House, was one of those who shrunk at the last moment from a change so radical, and, rather than sign the petition, resigned the Speakership. Dr Franklin, who was immediately elected Speaker, had no such scruples, and the petition was duly signed by him. Franklin occupied the Speaker’s chair but a few days. The members of the Assembly being elected annually, the Speaker held his office only until the end of the session.


Mr John Dickinson, a gentleman of great wealth, worth, and influence, a member of the late Assembly, was opposed to a change of government, and published, soon after the adjournment, the speech he had delivered in the Assembly against the petition to the king. To this speech a friend of the orator prefixed a preface. Mr Joseph Galloway, a member who favoured a change, and who was a city candidate for re-election, published a speech in support of the petition, which his brother candidate, Dr Franklin, prefaced with a review of the policy of the proprietaries.

The new Assembly met a few days after the annual election, and Franklin was appointed to the office of agent of the Assembly, that he might himself manage the affair of the petition to the king, and convey to the ministry in England the sense of the Assembly with regard to the proposed Stamp Act. The proprietary party in the Assembly strove to prevent his appointment, and Mr Dickinson declaimed against it with much energy. After long opposition, Franklin was elected agent, and he accepted the trust. ✧



CHAPTER XVII.

OFFICIAL LABOURS IN LONDON.

T was in the evening of the 10th of December 1764, that the agent of Pennsylvania arrived in London. The notorious Stamp Act, so obnoxious to his countrymen, and which threatened to be so disastrous in its consequences, he soon found, was the absorbing topic with all the colonial agents, with whom he was often in consultation during the next few weeks. By every means his ingenuity could suggest, Dr Franklin sought to prevent the introduction of a measure, which proved, to use his own language, "the mother of mischiefs." He was powerless. The Act was passed. This done he had leisure to attend to the special business of his agency, the deliverance of Pennsylvania from the incubus of the Penns. In order to remove a troublesome topic from the path of our narrative, we may as well state at once, that the petition to the king for a change of government in Pennsylvania, came to nothing. Franklin presented it, and the Penns opposed it with all their power and all their art. But from 1765, when the petition was presented, to 1775, when the revolution began, there was never an interval of tranquillity long enough to bring so difficult an affair to a conclusion.

Soon after midsummer the news of the effect upon Ame-

rica of the Stamp Act began to arrive in England. Every ship brought new proofs of the extent and intensity of the opposition to it. Resolves were passed unanimously, at every meeting, to consume no more British manufactures until the hateful Act was repealed; to wear homespun, to eat no lamb, to suppress the ostentatious mourning at funerals, to live with the ancient frugality, were moderate and legitimate modes of agitation. But when, later in the summer, the commissions arrived from England for the persons appointed in each colony to distribute the stamped paper, then the popular fury had personal objects upon which to concentrate and expend itself. Those bells that had lately rung out a joyful peal to celebrate Dr Franklin's safe arrival in England were muffled, and heavily tolled, to express the popular execration of one of the first of the official acts done in England after his arrival.

The political enemies of Dr Franklin saw their opportunity, and improved it. Among other adverse publications, a rude caricature appeared, representing the Devil whispering in Franklin's ear, "Thee shall be agent, Ben, for all my dominions," and bearing this stanza :—

"All his designs concentre in himself,
For building castles and amassing pelf.
The public 'tis his wit to sell for gain,
Whom private property did ne'er maintain."

At one time the new house which Mrs Franklin had built in her husband's absence, and into which she had just removed, was supposed to be in danger from the mob. Governor Franklin hurried from his province to Philadelphia, and entreated the inmates of his father's house to take refuge in his own at Burlington. The brave

Mrs Franklin would not move, though she permitted her daughter to go. "I was for nine days," she wrote to her husband, "kept in a continual hurry by people to remove, and Sally was persuaded to go to Burlington for safety."

By the 1st of November 1765, the day on which the Stamp Act was to be put in force, it was known in England that the colonies, with one voice, had refused obedience to it. Orders for manufactured goods ceased to arrive from America, and all trades languished. The Act passed so carelessly had become the dividing topic between two political parties. But a more liberal ministry, with the Marquis of Rockingham at its head, and General Conway the leader of the House of Commons, had come in since the passing of the Act. In December, Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son: "The late imposed stamp duty our colonies absolutely refuse to pay. The Administration are for some indulgence and forbearance to these froward children of their mother country; the Opposition are for taking vigorous, as they call them, but I call them violent measures; and to have the tax collected by the troops we have there. For my part, I never saw a froward child mended by whipping; and I would not have the mother country become a step-mother."

The muttering storm from America soon changed his note. From midsummer until Parliament met in December, and during the spring, Franklin was chiefly occupied in effecting one object,—the repeal of the Stamp Act. "I was extremely busy," he wrote to Lord Kames, "attending members of both Houses, informing, explaining, consulting, disputing, in a continual hurry from morning till night." Mr Burke was the intelligence of the Administration, and Dr Franklin was the intimate, I may say the revered, friend

of Mr Burke. "Ignorance of American affairs," said Mr Burke in reviewing this period, "had misled Parliament. Knowledge alone could bring it into the right road." Accordingly, six weeks of the session were employed in hearing testimony at the bar in Committee of the whole House. "Every denomination of men," continues Mr Burke, "either of America, or connected with it by office, by residence, by commerce, by interest, even by injury; men of civil and military capacity, officers of the revenue, merchants, manufacturers of every species, and from every town in England, attended at the bar. Such evidence was never laid before Parliament." One of these witnesses, as every reader knows, was Dr Franklin. His examination, and the magnificent *début* of Mr Burke as a parliamentary orator, are the events of this session which have most interested posterity. Mr Burke's two speeches for the repeal, Dr Johnson said, "filled the town with wonder." Dr Franklin's examination instructed England, and thrilled America.

The leading advocates of the Stamp Act tried by a variety of questions to extort from Dr Franklin an intimation, that, if the Act should be repealed, the colonists would not object to pay a small internal tax, imposed merely to assert the right to tax. The Tory members would not understand that the opposition to the Stamp Act was an opposition to the principle involved in it. They kept insinuating that it was merely a mean begrudging of the sixpence. They supposed that if the amount of the tax were reduced, the warmth of the opposition would be abated. To one of the questions founded upon this opinion, Dr Franklin made a reply that was long enough for a speech. When the examination was over the Americans withdrew, and the committee rose. The next day, as Dr Franklin records, one of the Tory mem-

bers made a violent speech upon the examination, in the course of which he said:—"We have often experienced Austrian ingratitude, and yet we assisted Portugal; we experienced Portuguese ingratitude, and yet we assisted America. But what is Austrian ingratitude, what is the ingratitude of Portugal, compared to this of America? We have fought, bled, and ruined ourselves, to conquer for them; and now they come and tell us to our noses, even at the bar of this House, that they were not obliged to us." His clamour, remarks Franklin, was "very little minded."

The examination, indeed, was almost unanimously approved, for even Tories could scarcely censure a man for so ably pleading the cause of his country. "The Ministry," says Franklin, "were ready to hug me for the assistance I had given them." Burke said the scene always reminded him of a master examined by a parcel of school-boys. Dr Fothergill, who was present, wrote to a friend in Philadelphia:—"He gave such distinct, clear, and satisfactory answers to every interrogatory, and besides spoke his sentiments on the subject with such perspicuity and firmness, as did him the highest honour, and was of the greatest service to the American cause."

An imperfect outline of the examination soon found its way into American newspapers, and made the name of Franklin dear to every patriotic heart. The Act was repealed! The event is thus recorded in the diary of one of its greatest opponents:—"Friday, February 21st, 1766. The repeal of the Stamp Act was moved by Mr Conway, and seconded by Mr Grey Cooper. The House sat till four in the morning. The question for the Repeal was carried by a majority of 108 voices."

Franklin's joy at the Repeal was deep and fervent, but he

hastened to write to friends in Boston and Philadelphia, cautioning them to express their gladness in such a way that the enemies of America might derive neither aid nor comfort from it. For his own part, he celebrated the joyful event by sending his wife a new gown. "As the Stamp Act," he wrote to her, "is at length repealed, I am willing you should have a new gown, which you may suppose I did not send sooner, as I knew you would not like to be finer than your neighbours, unless in a gown of your own spinning. Had the trade between the two countries totally ceased, it was a comfort to me to recollect, that I had once been clothed, from head to foot, in woollen and linen of my wife's manufacture, that I never was prouder of any dress in my life, and that she and her daughter might do it again if it was necessary. I told the Parliament that it was my opinion, before the old clothes of the Americans were worn out, they might have new ones of their own making. I have sent you a fine piece of Pompadour satin, fourteen yards, cost eleven shillings a yard; a silk *negligèe* and petticoat of brocaded lutestring, for my dear Sally, with two dozen gloves, four bottles of lavender water, and two little reels. The reels are to screw on the edge of the table, when she would wind silk or thread."

He now asked permission of the Assembly to return home; and while waiting their reply, made the tour of Hanover and Holland. The only answer the Assembly made to his request, was to elect him agent for another year.

Meanwhile the news of the Repeal had filled America with delight. Never did any other people so abandon themselves to rapturous exultation, as the colonists on this occasion. In Boston, the very debtors were brought out of

jail, that there might, at such a moment, be no one unhappy in the town. When the glad tidings reached Philadelphia, the frequenters of the principal coffee-house sent for the captain of the ship to make one of their company, presented him with a gold-laced hat, and gave presents to every man and boy of his crew. They kept a punch-bowl replenished all day, free to every one who would drink the health of the king. At night the city was illuminated. The next day Governor Penn and the Mayor entertained three hundred gentlemen at the State-house, who drank the health of Dr Franklin, with all the honours, and resolved to clothe themselves, on the next birthday of the king, in complete suits of English manufacture, and give their homespun to the poor. On the birthday there was a grand banquet in a grove on the banks of the Schuylkill, and a procession, of which the sublime feature was a barge, forty feet long, named FRANKLIN, from which salutes were fired as it passed along the streets.

In the summer of 1767, after the session of Parliament, and before the effect of the appeal in America was known in England, Dr Franklin made his first visit to Paris, accompanied by his friend Sir John Pringle.

Returning to town and to business, after a month's holiday, is dull work at all times. On this occasion our gay excursionist was met by ill news and hard tasks. America was once more in a ferment. The people of New England were again resolving to forego the use of British manufactures, and, what was more important, were bent upon establishing manufactures of their own—a project terrible to British ears. The people and politicians of England were indignant at those proceedings, conceiving it an enormous impertinence that colonists should even meditate the

making of their own cloth and cutlery. "The newspapers," Franklin wrote, "are in full cry against America."

At the height of the clamour he wrote an article for the *London Chronicle*, vindicating and explaining the conduct of his countrymen.

The efforts of Dr Franklin to set the people of England right with regard to America produced not the smallest perceptible effect. The year 1768 was the year in which the Wilkes-and-Liberty madness raged in England with its utmost violence; a madness *wholly* due to the ignorance and infatuation of the king. Extravagant, dissolute, and base, deeply in debt, and without powerful connexions or genuine talent, Wilkes needed only to be let alone to vanish soon from the public scene. Precipitate and unlawful arrest, virulent and groundless prosecutions, made him for many years the idol of both continents; for Wilkes and Liberty was as familiar a cry in Philadelphia and Boston as in London. Returning from exile in the spring of this year, he was again elected to Parliament, from which the king had caused him to be expelled. The popular rejoicing on this occasion exceeded everything of the kind on record. "London," writes Franklin, "was illuminated two nights running, at the command of the mob, for the success of Wilkes, in the Middlesex election. The second night exceeded anything of the kind ever seen here on the greatest occasions of rejoicing, as even the small cross-streets, lanes, courts, and other out-of-the-way places were all in a blaze with lights, and the principal streets all night long, as the mobs went round again after two o'clock, and obliged people who had extinguished their candles to light them again. Those who refused had all their windows destroyed. The damage done, and expense of candles, have been computed

at fifty thousand pounds. The mob," he adds, "went about roaring and singing, requiring gentlemen and ladies of all ranks, as they passed in their carriages, to shout for Wilkes and Liberty, marking the same words on all their coaches with chalk, and "No. 45" on every door, which extends a vast way along the roads into the country. I went last week to Winchester, and observed, that for fifteen miles out of town there was scarce a door or window shutter next the road unmarked; and this continued, here and there, quite to Winchester, which is sixty-four miles."

[“45” was the number of the *North Briton* upon which the original prosecution for libel and sedition was founded, the expenses of which, amounting, as Lord North confessed, to more than one hundred thousand pounds, were voluntarily assumed and defrayed by the king.*]

At such a time as this, in such a country, what could be effected by the calm voice of reason and good humour, pleading the cause of a distant and unknown people, of whom, as Franklin said, every man in England felt himself to be a fraction of a sovereign? His countrymen, however, appreciated his exertions in their behalf; not yet suspecting that those exertions could in the end be unavailing. In the spring of 1768, while he was preparing for the third time to return to America, news came that the young colony of Georgia had appointed him its London agent. This appointment induced him to postpone his departure for a time. Next year New Jersey selected him for her agent, and the year following, his native province of Massachusetts. These appointments, together with the threatening aspect of colonial affairs, and the urgent entreaties of liberal men in

* Correspondence of John Wilkes, i., 134.

England and patriotic men in America, detained him still at his post in London. For ten years he was always on the point of returning; for ten years events were continually frustrating this design.

His new appointments had the effect of placing him at ease in his circumstances.

The Ministry regarded these new honours with no friendly eye. During this time we find in the high places of England only third-rate men in point of understanding, or deficient in point of character; while statesmen of talent and independence gave up, at length, even the remote expectation of office. George III. had an instinctive antipathy to able men; which antipathy, upon very slight provocation, could degenerate into rooted abhorrence. Burke, Chatham, Fox, Barré, Conway, Shelburne, all enjoyed the honour of his aversion while they were faithful to their country and its constitution; the King softening towards Burke only when, scared by the horrors of the French Revolution, that illustrious man threw himself headlong into the ranks of reaction. And thus it was that the conduct of the mother country toward the colonies grew more and more exasperating.

British troops had been landed in Boston, amid the silent rage of the people. Fourteen men-of-war, one memorable day in September 1768, had lain with their broadsides toward the town, while two regiments were conveyed to the shore.

Two years later occurred the Boston Massacre, the trial of Captain Preston, and the election of Franklin as the London Agent of the province.

A disruption between Great Britain and the North American colonies was now imminent. Franklin foresaw it

with some dismay, but still with confidence and fortitude. At length, in one of his official despatches to the Assembly of Massachusetts, written in May 1771, he definitely predicts it, and also gives his views as to the manner in which it would be, and ultimately was carried out.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

PRIVATE LIFE IN EUROPE.



RANKLIN, BENJAMIN, Esq., agent for Philadelphia, Craven Street, Strand.

Such is the account of our philosopher given in the thin "London Directory" for 1770.

With him lived William Temple Franklin, his grandson, a promising boy, who grew up under the eye and training of his grandfather, and to whom he proved a help and solace when he stood in need of both.

Besides little Temple, there lived with him Sally Franklin, the daughter of one of his English relatives, whom he adopted and educated, and who was happily married, in 1773, to a thriving English farmer. About the same time his domestic circle was further enlarged by the marriage of Miss Stevenson, his landlady's daughter, to Dr Hewson, a London physician of promise. The young couple and their children were greatly beloved by him.

His good wife, at Philadelphia, always longing for her husband's return, kept him well advised respecting the occurrences at his other home over the sea. Information still more interesting she had to communicate a year after his arrival in London. A young merchant of Philadelphia, of English birth, Mr Richard Bache, had proposed for the hand of his daughter; and after a little judicious remonstrance, and sage advice

to the young couple from Franklin, was finally accepted, and they were married at Philadelphia, October 29, 1767.

Let us by no means forget to mention that Mrs Franklin kept her husband supplied with American dainties, such as Indian meal, cranberries, apples, dried peaches, dried fish, hickory nuts, and the raw material of buckwheat cakes. "Since I cannot be in America," he would write "everything that comes from thence comforts me a little, as being something like home." Few captains sailed from Philadelphia for England who were not charged with parcels and hampers of home products, to be delivered at No. 7 Craven Street, Strand. A neat little note found among Franklin's papers, shows that the supply sometimes exceeded the Craven Street demand: "Dr Franklin presents his respectful compliments to Lord Bathurst, with some American nuts; and to Lady Bathurst, with some American apples; which he prays they will accept as a tribute from that country, small indeed, but *voluntary*."

During this ten years' residence in England, we find Franklin still exerting his talents in the way of practical philanthropy and patriotism. If he visited an hospital, he thought of the hospital in Philadelphia, which he had helped to found, and sent over to the managers any rules, papers, or suggestions which he thought they might find useful. When one of the managers sent him word that they had resolved to begin the formation of a medical library in the hospital, he sent them the only medical book he possessed, and solicited donations of similar works from his medical friends. The silk culture he laboured to promote in Pennsylvania, by sending over masses of information on the subject, and urging it as a branch of industry, profitable in itself, and not offensive to the English Government, since silk was not an

article produced in England. A company of silk growers was formed in the province, and Franklin had soon the pleasure of presenting to the Queen, through Sir John Pringle, a sample of American silk, which she not only accepted, but wore in the form of a dress.

In 1771 a noble scheme of benevolence was originated in the circle frequented by Dr Franklin. Lieutenant Cook, in June of that year, had returned to England in the ship *Endeavour*, from his first voyage round the world. His discoveries, which opened the wondrous realm of the Pacific to the contemplation of Europe, were the theme of every tongue. Prompt promotion, liberal appointments, and universal celebrity rewarded the adventurous son of a Yorkshire farm labourer. Captain Cook and New Zealand becoming the topic of discourse, one evening, at a learned club to which Dr Franklin belonged, the conversation at length took a practical turn, which led to the scheme just referred to. The Pacific Islands, said one gentleman, were inhabited by a brave and generous race, who were destitute of corn, fowls, and all quadrupeds except dogs; was it not incumbent on such a nation as England to send to them the seeds, the domestic animals, the metals, the inventions, the conveniences, most of which England herself had derived from other lands, and which had become so essential to her welfare? Captivated with the idea, Franklin said, "With all my heart I would subscribe to a voyage intended to communicate, in general, those benefits which we enjoy to countries destitute of them in the remote parts of the globe." The company took up the project with enthusiasm. A naval officer present, Mr Alexander Dalrymple, offered to undertake the command of the ship proposed, and he was requested to draw up an outline of the

scheme for the consideration of the benevolent. He complied with the request, and showed that the expense of a three years' voyage, with the requisite cargo of seeds and animals, would amount to about fifteen thousand pounds. To Mr Dalrymple's statement Dr Franklin prefixed some introductory observations, in his best manner, and the whole was printed in the form of a circular, in which were a few pithy sentences designed to show that a commercial nation like Great Britain had an interest in extending the area of civilisation ; because civilisation creates the wants which England was enriched by supplying.

This amiable and novel project was not carried out in the manner contemplated by the subscribers to the fund. The object proposed was accomplished, in part, by incorporating the scheme with that of discovery. Captain Cook himself was charged with the duty of leaving pairs of animals upon the islands of the Pacific, and other navigators continued the work, to the advantage of the natives and to European mariners. Other parts of the scheme were executed, in later times, by missionaries.

All this time Franklin did not forsake his early love, the observation of natural phenomena. He devoted much time at this part of his life to the study of the air, ventilation, the causes of colds, and other complaints arising from an impure atmosphere.

His advice was asked with regard to the better ventilation of the House of Commons, and he offered a suggestion, which, however, was not adopted. Indeed, a complete statement of Dr Franklin's philosophical investigations at this period of his life would fill a volume. Never was his mind more successfully employed. We see him expatiating in his letters upon such diverse topics as chim-

neys and swimming ; metallic roofs and spots on the sun ; the average fall of rain and fire-proof stairs ; the torpedo, the Armonica, and the north-west passage ; the magnet and improved carriage-wheels ; glass-blowing, Prince Rupert's drops, and the Aurora Borealis ; the inflammatory gases, and the effect of vegetation upon air and water. Nothing escaped him that transpired in philosophic circles, and his remarks on subjects agitated therein were always valuable, and frequently original. It is, however, the *method* of a philosopher that chiefly benefits those who come after him ; the method being, as it were, the pathway, which, when discovered and described, any intelligent mind can pursue, and reach interesting results. Franklin's method is particularly noticeable, because it was not that of a professor, whose occupation it is to investigate, but of a man naturally interested in the phenomena surrounding him, who studies them with a purely human curiosity. Any man or woman can study nature as Franklin studied it, and with success enough to enlighten and cheer the mind.

No circumstance was too trifling to set him upon a series of experiments. At dinner, one day, a bottle of Madeira was opened which had been bottled in Virginia many months before. Into the first glass poured from it fell three drowned flies. " Having heard it remarked that drowned flies were capable of being revived by the rays of the sun, I proposed making the experiment upon these ; they were therefore exposed to the sun upon a sieve, which had been employed to strain them out of the wine. In less than three hours two of them began by degrees to recover life. They commenced by some convulsive motions of the thighs, and at length they raised themselves upon their legs, wiped their eyes with their fore feet, beat and brushed their

wings with their hind feet, and soon after began to fly, finding themselves in Old England without knowing how they came thither. The third continued lifeless till sunset, when, losing all hopes of him, he was thrown away."

Upon this he remarks: "I wish it were possible, from this instance, to invent a method of embalming drowned persons in such a manner that they may be recalled to life at any period however distant; for having a very ardent desire to see and observe the state of America a hundred years hence, I should prefer to any ordinary death the being immersed in a cask of Madeira wine, with a few friends, till that time, to be then recalled to life by the solar warmth of my dear country!" The poetry and the prose of science were equally congenial with him.

The dense volumes of coal smoke which hang over London suggested to him the idea of contriving a stove which should consume its own smoke. He completed the invention in 1772, and had a stove of this description in operation at Craven Street during the whole of the following winter. It answered even beyond his expectations. He intended to print a description of it; but a "stress of politics" preventing, the beneficent conception lay dormant in smoky England until about the year 1840, when the principle began to be applied to the huge factory fires of the north.

His discoveries in electricity received a slight national recognition in 1769, when he was associated with Dr Cannon and others in devising a system of lightning-rods for the protection of St Paul's Cathedral. Three years later he was one of a Committee of the Royal Society who were requested by Government to draw up a plan for the protection of the principal powder-magazines from lightning. Dr Franklin wrote the report, recommending the use of pointed rods, to

which all the committee agreed but one, who favoured blunt conductors. A discussion on the subject arose, but Dr Franklin's opinion prevailed, and pointed conductors were placed both upon the magazines and upon Buckingham Palace.

This year he again visited Paris, and spent several weeks there. In 1772 he made his long ago meditated tour in Ireland, where he dined with the Lord-Lieutenant, supped with the leading patriots, was caressed and entertained by Lord Hillsborough, and admitted to the floor of the Irish Parliament by a unanimous vote.

The awful poverty of the Irish peasantry struck him with astonishment and dismay. "I thought often," he wrote, "of the happiness of New England, where every man is a freeholder, has a vote in public affairs, lives in a tidy, warm house, has plenty of good food and fuel, with whole clothes from head to foot, the manufacture, perhaps, of his own family. Long may they continue in this situation!"

Continuing his journey into Scotland, where he remarked that most of the peasantry still went barefoot, he spent several weeks among his old friends in that country, returning to London after an absence of three months.

During his absence from London in the summer of 1773, he passed a few weeks at the country residence of Lord Despencer, and employed himself, while there, in abridging the Book of Common Prayer. This abridgment was afterwards published, but seems never to have been adopted in any church, nor to have gained much notice.

Many experiments were performed by Dr Franklin, at different times and places, to show the effect of oil in smoothing the surface of water agitated by the wind. While on a tour in the North of England with Sir John Pringle,

he tried this experiment successfully upon the Derwent Water at Keswick. Dr Brownrigg was present, and, in answer to his inquiries afterwards, Franklin gave a history of what he had done in this way, and explained upon philosophical principles the singular fact, that had been established by his experiments. It was proved by numerous trials, that a small quantity of oil poured upon a lake or pond, when rough with waves, would speedily calm them, and produce a smooth and glassy surface. This he had often done in the presence of many spectators. Indeed, he was accustomed in his travels to carry a little oil in the joint of a bamboo cane, by which he could repeat the experiment whenever an occasion offered.

Dr Franklin's mind, indeed, was always more or less intent upon philosophical studies, for which his habits of observation and reflection peculiarly fitted him ; yet he wrote little on subjects of this kind during his second mission to England. His various political duties, and the deep interest he took in the affairs of his country, absorbed his time and thoughts. He wrote a few pieces, however, on electricity and other kindred subjects, and one on the analogy between electricity and magnetism. He also sketched the plan of an elaborate essay on the causes of taking cold. It was never finished, but he left copious notes, from which it appears that he made extensive investigations, and formed a theory by which he imagined that the nature of the malady would be better understood, and that more easy and effectual preventives might be used.

An edition of his philosophical writings was published at Paris in 1773, translated by Barbeu-Dubourg, a man of considerable eminence in the scientific world, and apparently well qualified for the task he undertook of translator and

commentator. It includes several original pieces communicated to him by the author. It comprises nearly all he had written on electricity and other philosophical subjects, with a few of his political and miscellaneous papers. The translator's notes are valuable. A fifth edition of the philosophical writings was published in London nearly at the same time.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE HUTCHINSON'S LETTERS—RETURN TO AMERICA.



WE are now come to the date of a transaction which contributed to reveal the origin of some of the most offensive proceedings of the British Government against the colonies, and which subjected Dr Franklin to much obloquy and abuse from the supporters of the Administration.

In December 1772 he procured and sent to Mr Cushing, chairman of the Committee of Correspondence in Massachusetts, certain original letters, which had been written by Governor Hutchinson, Lieutenant-Governor Oliver, and others, to Mr Thomas Whately, a member of Parliament, and for a time secretary under one of the ministers. These letters, though not official, related wholly to public affairs, and were intended to effect public measures. They were filled with representations, in regard to the state of things in the colonies, as contrary to the truth as they were insidious in their design. The discontents and commotions were ascribed to a factious spirit among the people, stirred up by a few intriguing leaders; and it was intimated that this spirit would be subdued, and submission to the Acts of Parliament would be attained by the presence of a military force, and by persevering in the coercive measures already begun.

When Dr Franklin sent over these letters, he stated to Mr Cushing his motives for doing it, and his opinion of their objects and tendency.

“On this occasion,” he wrote, “I think it fit to acquaint you that there has lately fallen into my hands part of a correspondence that I have reason to believe laid the foundation of most, if not all, our present grievances. I am not at liberty to tell through what channel I received it ; and I have engaged that it shall not be printed, nor copies taken of the whole or any part of it ; but I am allowed to let it be seen by some men of worth in the province, for their satisfaction only. In confidence of your preserving inviolably my engagement, I send you enclosed the original letters, to obviate every pretence of unfairness in copying, interpolation, or omission. The hands of the gentlemen will be well known. Possibly they may not like such an exposal of their conduct, however tenderly and privately it may be managed. But, if they are good men, or pretend to be such, and agree that *all good men wish a good understanding and harmony to subsist between the colonies and their mother country*, they ought the less to regret that, at the small expense of their reputation for sincerity and public spirit among their compatriots, *so desirable an event may in some degree be forwarded*. For my own part, I cannot but acknowledge that my resentment against this country, for its arbitrary measures in governing us, conducted by the late minister, has, since my conviction by these papers that those measures were projected, advised, and called for by men of character among ourselves, and whose advice must therefore be attended with all the weight that was proper to mislead, and which could therefore scarce fail of misleading ; my own resentment, I say, has by this means been exceedingly abated. I

think they must have the same effect with you ; but I am not, as I have said, at liberty to make the letters public."

Acting in this business from an imperative sense of duty, Dr Franklin took no pains to screen himself from consequences. He mentioned the subject several times in his correspondence with Mr Cushing and Dr Cooper, but he did not in any instance intimate a wish that his name, as connected with it, or his agency, should be concealed. Mr Cushing proceeded with caution, however, and informed two gentlemen only of the source from which the letters had come ; and these gentlemen kept the secret till it was published by Dr Franklin himself in London. Nor was it known, except to these individuals, by whom the letters were received in Boston. Mr Cushing said, in writing to Dr Franklin, " I desire, so far as I am concerned, my name not to be mentioned ; for it may be a damage to me." This injunction was obeyed to the last.

It was concluded by Mr Cushing to lay them before the Assembly, which usually sat with closed doors. They were read, but nothing could be done with them while the prohibition against taking copies remained. While they were under consideration, Dr Cooper wrote a letter to Dr Franklin, dated Boston, June 14, 1773, from which the following is an extract : —

" I forgot to mention that, upon the first appearance of the letters in the House, they voted, by a majority of 101 to 5, that the design and tendency of them were to subvert the constitution, and introduce arbitrary power. Their committee upon this matter reported this day a number of resolutions, which are to be printed by to-morrow morning, and every member furnished with a copy, that they may compare them with the letters ; and to-morrow at three o'clock

in the afternoon is the time appointed to decide upon the report. The acceptance of it by a great majority is not doubted.

“Nothing could have been more seasonable than the arrival of these letters. They have had great effect ; they make deep impressions wherever they are known ; they strip the mask from the writers, who, under the professions of friendship to their country, now plainly appear to have been endeavouring to build up themselves and their families upon its ruins. They and their adherents are shocked and dismayed ; the confidence reposed in them by many is annihilated ; and Administration must soon see the necessity of putting the provincial power of the Crown into other hands, if they mean it should operate to any good effect. This at present is almost the universal sentiment.” ✕

The resolutions here mentioned as having been reported by a committee of the House, were passed the next day by a very large majority, warmly censuring the letters, as having the tendency and design, not only to sow the seeds of discord and encourage the oppressive acts of the British Government, but to introduce arbitrary power into the province, and subvert its constitution. A petition to the King was then voted with the same unanimity, praying his Majesty to remove from office Governor Hutchinson and Lieutenant-Governor Oliver, who, by their conduct, had rendered themselves obnoxious to the people, and entirely lost their confidence.

When the petition arrived, Lord Dartmouth was at his seat in the country. Dr Franklin transmitted it to him, and his Lordship, after his return to town, informed him, that it had been presented to his Majesty ; but, from the tenor of the minister's conversation, he was led to suspect that it would not be complied with.

In the meantime an event took place, which caused much excitement. Hutchinson's letters had been printed in Boston, and copies of them came over to London. Public curiosity was raised, and great inquiry was made, as to the person by whom they had been transmitted. Mr Thomas Whately was dead, and his papers had gone into the possession of his brother, Mr William Whately, who was censured for allowing the letters to be taken away. Mr Temple had asked permission of him to examine his brother's papers, with the view of perusing a certain document on colonial affairs, which he believed to be among them. The permission was granted ; and now Mr Whately's suspicion rested upon Mr Temple, whom he imagined to have taken advantage of this opportunity to gain possession of the letters in question. A duel was the consequence, in which Mr Whately was wounded.

At this crisis Dr Franklin felt himself bound to interfere. He immediately published a declaration, in which he assumed the entire responsibility of having transmitted the letters, and said, that, as they were not among Mr Thomas Whately's papers when these passed into the hands of his brother, neither he nor Mr Temple could have been concerned in withdrawing them. The whole tide of obloquy was now turned against Dr Franklin. He was assailed by the friends of Mr Whately for not having prevented the duel by an earlier declaration ; and he was vehemently attacked by the retainers of the Ministry for the part he had acted in procuring and sending the letters. To the first charge it is enough to say, that he had no intimation of the duel till it was over. He thought himself entitled to the thanks of the parties, rather than their censure, for thus relieving them from suspicion in the eyes of the public, and removing the cause of

their personal difference. As to the other charge, it was no more than he expected ; and he was prepared to meet it with a clear conscience, having no private ends to serve in the transaction, and no other motive than justice to his country.

Notice was at length given to Dr Franklin, that his Majesty had referred the petition to the Privy Council, and that a meeting would be held in three days to take it into consideration at the Cockpit, where his attendance was required. He accordingly appeared there at the time appointed, January 11, 1774, with Mr Bollan, the agent for the Massachusetts Council. This petition was read, and Dr Franklin was asked what he had to offer in support of it. He replied, that Mr Bollan would speak in behalf of the petitioners, this having been agreed upon between them. Mr Bollan began to speak, but he was silenced by the Lords of the Council, because he was not the agent for the Assembly. It then appeared, that Hutchinson and Oliver had employed Mr Wedderburn, the King's solicitor, as their counsel, who was then present, and ready to go on with their defence. Authenticated copies of the letters were produced, and some conversation ensued, in which Mr Wedderburn advanced divers cavils against them, and said it would be necessary to know how the Assembly came by them, through whose hands they had passed, and to whom they were addressed. To this the Lord Chief Justice assented.

When Mr Wedderburn proceeded to speak further, Dr Franklin interrupted him, and said he had not understood that counsel was to be employed against the petition. He did not conceive, that any point of law or right was involved, which required the arguments of lawyers, but he supposed it to be rather "a question of civil and political prudence ;"

in which their Lordships would decide, from the state of facts presented in the papers themselves. whether the complaints of the petitioners were well founded, and whether the governor and lieutenant-governor had so far rendered themselves obnoxious to the people, as to make it for the interest of his Majesty's service to remove them. He then requested, that counsel might likewise be heard in behalf of the Assembly. The request was granted, and three weeks were allowed for preparation. The adjourned hearing took place as arranged, and an extraordinary scene took place, which was thus described by Dr Franklin a few days after its occurrence :—

“Notwithstanding intimations I had received, I could not believe that the Solicitor-General would be permitted to wander from the question before their Lordships, into a new case, the accusation of another person for another matter, not cognisable before them, who could not expect to be there so accused, and therefore could not be prepared for his defence. And yet all this happened, and in all probability was preconcerted ; for all the courtiers were invited, as to an entertainment, and there never was such an appearance of privy councillors on any occasion, not less than thirty-five, besides an immense crowd of other auditors.

“The hearing began by reading my letter to Lord Dartmouth, enclosing the petition, then the petition itself, the resolves, and, lastly, the letters, the Solicitor-General making no objections, nor asking any of the questions he had talked of at the preceding board. Our counsel then opened the matter, upon their general plan, and acquitted themselves very handsomely ; only Mr Dunning, having a disorder on his lungs that weakened his voice exceedingly, was not so perfectly heard as one could have wished. The Solicitor-

General then went into what he called a history of the province for the last ten years, and bestowed plenty of abuse upon it, mingled with encomium on the governors. But the favourite part of his discourse was levelled at your agent, who stood there the butt of his invective ribaldry for near an hour, not a single Lord adverting to the impropriety and indecency of treating a public messenger in so ignominious a manner, who was present only as the person delivering your petition; with the consideration of which no part of *his* conduct had any concern. If he had done a wrong in obtaining and transmitting the letters, that was not the tribunal where he was to be accused and tried. The cause was already before the Chancellor. Not one of their Lordships checked and recalled the orator to the business before them; but, on the contrary, a very few excepted, they seemed to enjoy highly the entertainment, and frequently burst out in loud applause. This part of his speech was thought so good that they have since printed it, in order to defame me everywhere, and particularly to destroy my reputation on your side of the water; but the grosser parts of the abuse are omitted, appearing, I suppose, in their own eyes, too foul to be seen on paper; so that the speech, compared to what it was, is now perfectly decent. I send you one of the copies. My friends advise me to write an answer, which I purpose immediately.

“The’reply of Mr Dunning concluded. Being very ill, and much incommoded by standing so long, his voice was so feeble as to be scarce audible. What little I heard was very well said, but appeared to have little effect.

“Their Lordships’ report, which I send you, is dated the same day. It contains a severe censure, as you will see, on the petition and the petitioners, and, as I think, a very

unfair conclusion from my silence, that the charge of surreptitiously obtaining the letters was a true one ; though the solicitor, as appears in the printed speech, had acquainted them that that matter was before the Chancellor ; and my counsel had stated the impropriety of my answering there to charges then trying in another court. In truth, I came by them honourably, and my intention in sending them was virtuous, if an endeavour to lessen the breach between two states of the same empire be such, by showing that the injuries complained of by one of them did not proceed from the other, but from traitors among themselves."

After this judicial farce, no one could be surprised at the result. Their Lordships reported, "that the petition was founded upon resolutions formed upon false and erroneous allegations, and that the same was groundless, vexatious, and scandalous, and calculated only for the seditious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamour and discontent in the provinces." The King approved the report, and the petition was dismissed. And such was the language which the British rulers thought proper to use in replying to the respectful complaints of an ancient and populous province. If the people would bear this, they might well say that their long-cherished freedom had become an empty sound and a mockery. Let history tell how they bore it, and how long.

The next day Dr Franklin was officially informed of his being dismissed from the place of deputy postmaster-general. For this manifestation of the royal displeasure he was prepared, as well by previous intimations as by the proceedings of the Council. It cannot be supposed that he was callous to these indignities, especially as they were intended to overwhelm him with disgrace, and ruin his credit and influence. But he suppressed his resentment, and took no steps

either to vindicate himself, or to counteract the malicious arts of his enemies, conscious of having done only what his duty required. When the facts came to be known and understood, his conduct was applauded by every friend of liberty and justice in both countries. He gained new credit, instead of losing what he possessed, thus baffling the iniquitous schemes of his adversaries, whom he lived to see entangled in their own toils, and whose disgraceful overthrow it was his fortune to be a principal instrument in effecting.

Franklin now contemplated returning home, but in the meantime the news arrived, that the Continental Congress was about to convene, and, by the advice of his friends, Dr Franklin concluded to wait the issue of that event.

While Dr Franklin was making preparations to leave England early in the spring, and looking forward to a happy meeting with his family, from whom he had been separated ten years, he received the afflicting intelligence of the death of his wife. She was attacked with a paralytic stroke, which she only survived five days. For some months she had complained of occasional ill health, but nothing serious was apprehended by her friends, although she was heard to express a conviction, that she should not recover. They had been married forty-four years, and lived together in a state of uninterrupted harmony and happiness.

Their correspondence during his long absence, a great part of which has been preserved, is affectionate on both sides, exhibiting proofs of an unlimited confidence and devoted attachment. He omitted no opportunity to send her whatever he thought would contribute to her convenience and comfort, accompanied by numerous little tokens of remembrance and affection. So much did he

rely on her prudence and capacity, that, when abroad, he entrusted to her the management of his private affairs. Many years after her death, in writing to a young lady, he said : "Frugality is an enriching virtue ; a virtue I never could acquire myself ; but I was once lucky enough to find it in a wife, who therefore became a fortune to me." The little song which he wrote in her praise, is marked with a playful tenderness, and contains sentiments creditable to his feelings as a man and a husband. In his autobiography and letters he often mentions his wife, and always with a kindness and respect, which could proceed only from genuine sensibility and a high estimate of her character and virtues.

About the middle of December 1774, Dr Franklin received the petition of the first Continental Congress to the King, with a letter from the president of Congress to the several colonial agents in London, requesting them to present the petition. All the agents, except Franklin, Bollan, and Lee, declined acting in the business, alleging that they had no instructions. These three gentlemen, however, carried it to Lord Dartmouth, who, after retaining it one day for perusal, during which a Cabinet Council was held, agreed to deliver it ; and in a short time he informed them, that his Majesty had been pleased to receive it "very graciously," and would lay it before both Houses of Parliament. This was accordingly done, but without any allusion to it in the King's speech, or any message calling the attention of Parliament to the subject. It was sent down with a mass of letters of intelligence, newspapers, and pamphlets, and laid upon the table undistinguished from the other papers with which it was accompanied. The agents requested to be heard at the bar of the House in support of the petition, but were refused. When it came up for con-

sideration, it was rejected by an overwhelming majority, after a heated debate, in which the ministerial members spoke contemptuously of the Americans and of their pretended grievances, and insisted on reducing them to obedience at all events, and by force of arms if that were necessary.

While the first Congress was sitting, Galloway, who was a member from Pennsylvania, proposed a plan of union between Great Britain and the colonies, which met with so little success, that there was almost a unanimous voice for not permitting it to be entered in the journals. Piqued at this slight, and at a defeat of a scheme from which he had formed high expectations, Galloway caused his plan to be printed, in connexion with disrespectful observations on the proceedings of Congress. He sent a copy of it to Dr Franklin, who in his reply, without touching upon its merits, gave his ideas of some preliminary articles, which he said ought to be agreed to before any plan of union could be established.

For some years past, Dr Franklin had foreseen, that if the ministers persevered in their mad projects against the colonies, a rupture between the two countries and a civil war would soon follow ; and he used all the means in his power to induce a change of measures. This was known to gentlemen of influence in the Opposition, who were striving to effect the same end, and who accordingly sought his counsel and co-operation. Lord Chatham was among those who condemned the policy and acts of the Administration ; and he was resolved to make a strenuous effort in Parliament to avert the calamity, which he saw, as he thought, impending over the nation. In the month of August 1774, while Dr Franklin was on a visit to Mr

Sargent, at his seat in Kent, he received an invitation from Lord Chatham to visit him at Hayes, his Lordship's residence, which was not far distant. Lord Stanhope called on Dr Franklin the next day, and accompanied him to Hayes.

The conversation turned on American affairs. Lord Chatham spoke feelingly on the late laws against Massachusetts; censured them with severity, and said he had a great esteem for the people of that country, and "hoped they would continue firm, and unite in defending, by all practicable and legal means, their constitutional rights." Dr Franklin said he was convinced they would do so, and then proceeded to explain the nature and grounds of their complaints, the unconstitutional encroachments of Parliament, and the injustice and impolicy of the measures which the ministers were rashly enforcing, and which would inevitably alienate the affections of the colonists, and drive them to desperation and open resistance.

His Lordship seemed pleased with his frankness, assented to some of his statements, and raised queries respecting others. He mentioned an opinion prevailing in England, that the Americans were aiming to set up an independent state. Dr Franklin assured him, that he had at different times travelled from one end of the continent to the other, conversed with all descriptions of people, and had never heard a hint of this kind from any individual. This declaration referred to the past, and to the actual disposition towards the mother country before the late events, and not to the temper which had been excited by the novel aggressions of the British Government; for Dr Franklin himself, at this very time, as we learn from his conversation with Mr Quincy, was looking forward to independence, because he

was satisfied that the Ministry would not relax from their tyrannical measures, and that the people would not endure them. On this ground alone he expected independence, and not from anything that had as yet been done or resolved by the colonists.

Lord Chatham was affable, professed to be much pleased with the visit, and politely told Dr Franklin that he should be glad to see him whenever his convenience would permit.

In the meantime two of his friends, Dr Fothergill and David Barclay, jointly expressed to him great concern at the present state of the colonial dispute, and urged him with much solicitude to make a new and formal attempt to bring about a reconciliation, saying that he understood the business better than anybody else, and could manage it more effectually, and that it seemed to be his duty to leave no expedient untried, which would tend to promote an object of so great moment to both countries. At first he objected to any further interference, believing the Ministry were not in the least inclined to an accommodation, but that they wished rather to irritate the colonists and push them to acts of resistance, that they might have a pretence for using force to reduce them to submission. Dr Fothergill and Mr Barclay were of a different opinion, and were convinced that, whatever might be the designs of some of the ministers, others seriously desired a reconciliation, and would listen to any reasonable propositions for that end. They entreated him to think of the matter, and to sketch a plan, such as he should be willing to support, and as in his opinion would be acceptable to the colonies. With some reluctance he yielded to their solicitation, and promised to prepare a draft, and show it to them at their next meeting.

In the meantime, Franklin drew up a paper, consisting of

seventeen articles, which he called *Hints*, but which embodied the elements of a compact, and at the time appointed he met Dr Fothergill and Mr Barclay, produced his *Hints*, and explained and defended each article. They objected to some parts, and doubted as to others; yet they thought it worth while to make the experiment, as a preliminary step towards a negotiation, and asked permission to take copies of his paper, intimating an intention to show it in the ministerial circles. Dr Franklin, submitting to the discretion of his friends, did not object to this proposal, and two copies were transcribed in the handwriting of Mr Barclay.

Soon afterwards, he was informed that Lord Chatham would offer a motion to the House of Lords the following day, and desired his attendance. The next morning, January 20th, he likewise received a message from Lord Chatham, telling him, that if he would be in the lobby at two o'clock, he would introduce him. "I attended," says Dr Franklin, "and met him there accordingly. As it had not been publicly known that there was any communication between his lordship and me, this, I found, occasioned some speculation." Lord Chatham moved, that the troops should be withdrawn from Boston. This gave rise to a warm debate, in which the motion was ably and eloquently sustained by the mover and Lord Camden, but it was lost by a large majority.

In the course of his remarks Lord Chatham mentioned, that this motion was introductory to a general plan for a reconciliation, which he proposed to lay before Parliament. This was the subject, in regard to which he had before intimated to Dr Franklin that he should want his advice and assistance. A week after the debate on the motion,

he spent a day with his lordship, who showed him the outlines of his plan, and asked his opinion and observations upon all its principal points. Lord Chatham next called at his lodgings in town, and passed nearly two hours with him on the same business. The draft of his plan was now completed, and he left a copy of it with Dr Franklin, requesting him to consider it maturely, and suggest any alterations or additions that might occur to him. He made another visit to Hayes, where the plan was again discussed, and the work was finished.

He did not approve the plan in all its parts, nor believe it would be acceptable to the colonies; and he freely stated his objections. But it was necessary to conform in some degree to the prejudices prevailing in Parliament, or there would be no hope of gaining the attention of that body to any propositions; and Lord Chatham himself did not suppose that, in any event, his plan would be adopted precisely as he should present it. His aim was to open the way to an accommodation, and amendments might be introduced in its progress through the House. Little else was to be expected, than that it might serve as the basis of a treaty. And in the meantime, before it passed, the Americans would have an opportunity of knowing what it was, and of making objections and propositions.

This plan was submitted to the House of Lords, in the form of a bill, on the 1st of February. Lord Stanhope, at the request of Lord Chatham, accompanied Dr Franklin to the House, and procured him admittance. The House was very full. Lord Chatham exerted all his powers of eloquence and argument in support of his plan. It was vehemently assailed by the ministers and their adherents; and was defended by the Dukes of Richmond and Man-

chester, Lord Shelburne, Lord Camden, Lord Temple, and others. The ministerial influence was so great, however, that it was not even allowed to lie on the table for future consideration, but was rejected by a majority of two to one.


Whatever may be thought of this negotiation as an affair of diplomacy, or of the aims of those connected with it on the British side, there can be but one opinion as to the manner in which it was conducted by Franklin. It was creditable to his patriotism and sagacity. He had been absent ten years from America, and could know the opinions and feelings of his countrymen only from the reports of their proceedings and published papers. He was beyond the reach of the enthusiasm naturally inspired by a union of numbers in defending rights and resisting oppression ; yet no American could have placed the demands of the colonies on a broader foundation, or supported them with a more ardent zeal, or insisted on them with a more determined resolution.

These transactions detained him longer in England than he had expected. He was now ready for his departure, and he received a message from Dr Fothergill for their mutual friends in Philadelphia. "Tell them," said he, "that, whatever specious pretences are offered, they are all hollow." Dr Fothergill was as much disgusted, as disappointed, with the ministerial manœuvres, which he had discovered in the course of the late negotiation.

He sailed from England on the 21st of March 1775, and arrived at Philadelphia on the 5th of May, employing himself during the long voyage in writing an account of his recent attempts to establish peace and harmony between the two countries.

CHAPTER XX.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

HE next day after his arrival, Dr Franklin was unanimously chosen by the Assembly of Pennsylvania a delegate to the second Continental Congress, which was to meet at Philadelphia on the 10th of May. At this time the whole country was thrown into a state of extreme agitation by the news of a conflict at Lexington and Concord, in which the British troops were the aggressors. The yeomanry of New England, as if moved by a simultaneous impulse, seized their arms, and hastened to the scene of action. The indignation of the people was everywhere roused to the highest pitch, and the cry of war resounded from one end of the continent to the other. A few days after he landed, Dr Franklin wrote as follows to Dr Priestley:—

“ You will have heard, before this reaches you, of a march stolen by the regulars into the country by night, and of their *expedition* back again. They retreated twenty miles in six hours. The governor had called the Assembly to propose Lord North’s pacific plan, but, before the time of their meeting, began cutting of throats. You know it was said he carried the sword in one hand, and the olive branch in the other; and it seems he chose to give them a taste of the sword

first. He is doubling his fortifications at Boston, and hopes to secure his troops till succour arrives. The place, indeed, is naturally so defensible that I think them in no danger. All America is exasperated by his conduct, and more firmly united than ever. The breach between the two countries is grown wider, and in danger of becoming irreparable."

When the second Congress assembled, the relations between the colonies and Great Britain had assumed a new character.

After an animated debate, which continued several days, it was declared that hostilities had commenced on the part of Great Britain, with the design of enforcing "the unconstitutional and oppressive Acts of Parliament;" and it was then resolved, with great unanimity, that the colonies should be immediately put in a state of defence. This was all that the most ardent friends of liberty desired, since it enabled them to organise an army, and make preparations for war. Having gained this point, they were the more ready to yield another, for the sake of harmony, to the moderate party, at the head of which was John Dickinson. It was urged by this party, that they never had anticipated resistance by force, but had always confided so much in the justice of the British Government as to believe that, when they fairly understood the temper and equitable claims of the colonists, they would come to a reasonable compromise. Another opportunity, it was said, ought to be offered, and to this end they were strenuous for sending a petition to the King.

In addition to his duties in Congress, Dr Franklin had a very laborious service to perform, as chairman of the Committee of Safety, appointed by the Assembly of Pennsylvania. This committee consisted of twenty-five members. They were authorised to call the militia into actual service,

whenever they should judge it necessary, to pay and furnish them with supplies, and to provide for the defence of the province. Bills of credit, to the amount of thirty-five thousand pounds, were issued and put into their hands, to pay the expenses incurred for these objects. This was a highly responsible and important trust. Franklin laboured in it incessantly during eight months, till he was called away upon another service. "My time," says he, "was never more fully employed. In the morning at six I am at the Committee of Safety, which committee holds till near nine, when I am at Congress, and that sits till after four in the afternoon. Both these bodies proceed with the greatest unanimity." The attention of the committee was especially directed to the protection of the city, by sinking *chevaux-de-frise* in the Delaware, constructing and manning armed boats, and erecting fortifications. These works were executed with surprising despatch, and so effectually that, when the enemy's fleet entered the river, after the battle of the Brandywine, it was retarded by them nearly two months.

While thus actively engaged, Dr Franklin drew up and presented to Congress, on the 21st of July, a plan of confederation. It was not acted upon at that time, but it served as a basis for a more extended plan, when Congress were better prepared to consider the subject.

The post-office establishment, which had existed under the British Government, was broken up by the disorders of the times. Congress made provision for a new one, and appointed Dr Franklin postmaster-general, with a salary of one thousand dollars a year. The entire management of the business was put under his control, with power to establish such post routes, and appoint as many deputies as he should think proper.

For several months the proceedings of Congress turned mostly on military affairs. An army was to be raised, organised, and provided for. The wisdom, experience, and mental resources of every member were in as much demand as diligence, resolution, zeal, and public spirit. We find Franklin, notwithstanding his advanced age, taking a part in almost every important measure with all the ardour and activity of youth. He was placed at the head of the Commissioners for Indian affairs in the middle department; and few of the younger members served on so many committees requiring energy, industry, and close application. ~~✱~~

A Secret Committee was appointed, of which he was a member. At first, it was the province of this committee to import ammunition, cannon, and muskets; but its powers and duties were enlarged, so as to include the procuring of all kinds of military supplies, and the distributing of them to the troops, the Continental armed vessels, and privateers, and also the manufacturing of saltpetre and gunpowder. The country was alarmingly deficient in all these articles; and it was necessary to procure them from abroad by contracts with foreign merchants, and to have them shipped as secretly as possible, that they might not be intercepted and captured by the enemy. Remittances were made in tobacco and other produce, either directly or through such channels as would render them available for the payments.

As soon as Congress had determined to raise an army, and had appointed a commander-in-chief and the other principal officers, they applied themselves to the business of finance, and emitted two millions of dollars in bills of credit. This was the beginning of the Continental paper-money system. Dr Franklin entered deeply into the subject, but he did not altogether approve the principle upon which the

bills were emitted. He proposed that they should bear interest, but this was rejected. After the first emission, he recommended that the bills already in circulation should be borrowed on interest, instead of issuing a larger quantity. This plan was not followed at the time, but, when the bills began to sink in value, it was resorted to, and he then proposed to pay the interest in hard dollars, which would be likely to fix the value of the principal. This was deemed impracticable, although Congress came into the proposal afterwards; but not till it was too late to check the rapid progress of depreciation.

When Congress had put their military affairs in train, they began to think of foreign alliances. On the 29th of November, they appointed a *Committee of Secret Correspondence*, for the purpose of establishing and keeping up an intercourse with the friends of the American cause in England, Ireland, and other parts of Europe. Dr Franklin's long residence abroad, his extensive acquaintance with men of character there, and his knowledge of their political sentiments, naturally qualified him for acting a principal part in this committee. He wrote letters to some of his friends in Europe, on whose discretion and fidelity he could rely, requesting them to watch the current of events, and the tendency of public opinion, in regard to the American controversy; to ascertain, as far as it could be done, the designs of men in power, and to communicate intelligence on these points for the use of Congress.

From the beginning of the contest, many efforts had been made to induce the Canadians to join the other colonies; and it was proposed to them, that they should send delegates to the Congress. A hope of this union was entertained for a time, but it was finally disappointed. The hos-

tile attitude in which the Canadians and English colonists had been placed towards each other on various occasions, in addition to the inherited national antipathy on both sides, had produced an alienation, which could not easily be softened into a fraternal fellowship ; and the obstacles were multiplied by religious animosities. In the first year of the war, while the Americans had an army in Canada, there was some show of a party in their favour ; but this party was by no means an index of the popular will or feeling, and it soon dwindled away and disappeared.

The military successes, which had put nearly the whole of Canada into the possession of the Americans, terminated with the fall of Montgomery under the walls of Quebec. More troops were sent forward in the heart of winter ; but, when the spring opened, reinforcements arrived from England, threatening disaster and defeat to the American army. At this juncture Congress appointed commissioners to go to Canada, with full powers to regulate the operations of the army, and especially to assist the Canadians in forming a civil government, and to pledge all the support and protection that could be rendered by the united colonies. Dr Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll were selected for this mission.

The commissioners left Philadelphia about the 20th of March 1776, but on account of the badness of the roads did not reach Montreal till near the end of April. Dr Franklin's health was much impaired by the hardships of the journey. He had been exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and in some parts of the route he was obliged to lodge in the woods. He stayed a fortnight at Montreal, and then, in company with Mr John Carroll, he set out on his way homeward, leaving the other commissioners behind, who remained

in Canada till near the time it was evacuated by the American troops. With some difficulty he proceeded to Albany. From that place to New York he was conveyed in a private carriage, with which he had been accommodated by the kindness of General Schuyler. He arrived at Philadelphia early in June.

A subject of the greatest importance was now brought before Congress. For some months past there had been much discussion in the newspapers, in pamphlets, and at public meetings, as well as in private circles, about independence. It was evident that a large majority of the nation was prepared for that measure. At length the legislature of Virginia instructed their delegates to propose it in Congress. This was done by Richard Henry Lee; and a debate ensued, which elicited the opinions of the prominent members. All agreed that, sooner or later, this ground must be taken; but a few believed that the time had not yet come. Among the doubters was the virtuous, the patriotic, the able, but irresolute John Dickinson. His objections, and those of his party, were met by the fervid zeal and powerful arguments of John Adams, the persuasive eloquence of Lee, and the concurring voice of many others. On this side was Franklin, whose sentiments have been sufficiently indicated in the preceding pages. A committee of five was chosen to prepare a Declaration, consisting of Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Sherman, and Livingston. The history of this transaction is too well known to need a repetition of it in this place. The Declaration, drafted by Jefferson, was reported as it came from his pen, except a few verbal alterations suggested by Adams and Franklin. It was debated three days, and passed on the 4th of July, when the United States were declared to be, and became in fact, an independent nation.

Mr Jefferson relates a characteristic anecdote of Franklin connected with this subject. Being annoyed at the alterations made in his draft while it was under discussion, and at the censures freely bestowed upon parts of it, he began to fear it would be dissected and mangled till a skeleton only would remain. "I was sitting," he observes, "by Dr Franklin, who perceived that I was not insensible to these mutilations. 'I have made it a rule,' said he, 'whenever in my power, to avoid becoming the draftsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body. I took my lesson from an incident which I will relate to you. When I was a journeyman printer, one of my companions, an apprentice hatter, having served out his time, was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome signboard, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words, *John Thompson, hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money*, with a figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to thought the word *hatter* tautologous, because followed by the words *makes hats*, which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word *makes* might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats; if good and to their mind, they would buy, by whomsoever made. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words *for ready money* were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. Every one who purchased expected to pay. They were parted with; and the inscription now stood, "*John Thompson sells hats.*" "*Sells hats?*" says his next friend; "why, nobody will expect you to give them away. What, then, is the use of that word?" It was stricken out, and *hats* followed, the rather as there was one painted on the board.

So his inscription was reduced ultimately to *John Thompson*, with the figure of a hat subjoined.’”

There is also another anecdote related of Franklin respecting an incident which took place when the members were about to sign the Declaration. “We must be unanimous,” said Hancock; “there must be no pulling different ways; we must all hang together.” “Yes,” replied Franklin, “we must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

Nearly two months before the Declaration of Independence, Congress had recommended that new systems of government should be framed and adopted by the representatives of the people in the colonies where a change was required by the exigencies of their affairs. In conformity with this recommendation, delegates from the counties of Pennsylvania met in convention at Philadelphia, about the middle of July, to form a constitution. Dr Franklin was chosen president. The convention sat more than two months, but the president was occasionally absent in Congress. The part he actually took in framing the constitution is not known, but it has generally been supposed that its principles were approved by him. This opinion is in some degree confirmed by his having defended it late in life when a change was contemplated. Rotation of office was one of its provisions; and the right of suffrage, the freedom of the press, and religious toleration, were secured on the most liberal scale.

From the King’s speech at the opening of Parliament in London, it appeared that he contemplated sending out commissioners to America, with power to grant pardon to such persons as they should think fit, and to receive the submission of such as should be disposed to return to their allegiance. In the early part of the session, Lord North brought

forward his *Prohibitory Bill*, interdicting all trade and intercourse with the colonies. By an awkward association, he incorporated into this bill a provision for appointing commissioners to effect the object mentioned in the King's speech.

In the spring of 1776, the main body of the American army under General Washington was stationed at New York. General Howe arrived there with his army from Halifax in June, and he was soon after joined by his brother Lord Howe, at the head of a fleet with troops from Europe. The two brothers had been appointed commissioners. Lord Howe immediately sent on shore a despatch, containing a circular letter to the colonial governors, and a "Declaration," stating the nature of his mission and his powers, and requesting that the declaration should be published. The commissioners were not instructed to negotiate with any particular public body. Pardon was offered to all who should be penitent and submissive; to provinces, towns, assemblies, and individuals. This despatch was conveyed to General Washington, by whom it was forwarded to Congress. It occasioned but little debate. The letter and declaration were directed to be published, "that the few," as expressed in the resolve, "who still remain suspended by a hope, founded either in the justice or moderation of their late King, may now at length be convinced, that the valour alone of their country is to save its liberties."

Lord Howe likewise wrote a private and friendly letter to Dr Franklin, evincing respect for his character, and an earnest desire that all the differences between the two countries might be accommodated in the way now proposed. It was answered by Dr Franklin in a spirit not less friendly and respectful; but, in regard to the public communications,

he said, he was sorry to find them of such a nature, since "it must give his lordship pain to be sent so far on so hopeless a business." After some other remarks, touching the conduct and designs of the Ministry, he added,—

"Long did I endeavour, with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preserve from breaking that fine and noble China vase, the British empire; for I knew that, being once broken, the separate parts could not retain even their share of the strength or value that existed in the whole, and that a perfect reunion of those parts could scarce ever be hoped for. Your lordship may possibly remember the tears of joy that wet my cheek, when, at your good sister's in London, you once gave me expectations that a reconciliation might soon take place. I had the misfortune to find those expectations disappointed, and to be treated as the cause of the mischief I was labouring to prevent. My consolation under that groundless and malevolent treatment was, that I retained the friendship of many wise and good men in that country, and, among the rest, some share in the regard of Lord Howe."

The door to a negotiation being closed, the battle of Long Island was fought, in which General Sullivan was taken prisoner. He was conveyed on board Lord Howe's ship, and discharged on parole. Lord Howe entrusted to him a verbal message for Congress, the purport of which was, that he should be glad to confer with some of the members in their private capacity, and would himself meet them in that capacity at such time and place as they might appoint. Congress accordingly deputed three of their number, Dr Franklin, John Adams, and Edward Rutledge, to go and learn what propositions he had to offer. The interview took place, September 11th, at a house within the

British lines on Staten Island, opposite to Amboy, where they were politely received and entertained.

His lordship began the conversation by informing them, that he could not treat with them as a committee of Congress, but that his powers authorised him to confer and consult with any private gentlemen in the colonies on the means of reconciling the differences and restoring peace. The committee replied, that it was their business to hear what he had to propose ; that he might look upon them in what light he chose ; that they were, nevertheless, members of Congress, and, being appointed by that body, they must consider themselves in that character. After the conference was ended, the committee passed over to Amboy in Lord Howe's boat, went back to Congress, and reported, that his lordship had made no explicit proposition for peace, and that, as far as they could discover, his powers did not enable him to do anything more than to grant pardon upon submission. This was the last attempt of the commissioners to effect what Mr Burke called in Parliament an "armed negotiation."

At this time Congress had under consideration the subject of foreign alliances. The American States being now an independent power, declared to be such by the solemn act of a united people, they might properly assume and maintain this character in relation to other Governments. Aids in money and all kinds of military supplies were wanted. Congress had the benefits of a lucrative commerce to offer in exchange. It was decided to make the first application to the court of France, and to proffer a commercial treaty, which should be mutually advantageous to the two countries. The hard terms, which England had extorted from the misfortunes of France in the treaty at the close of the last war, as impolitic on the part of the


former as they were humiliating to the latter, afforded but a feeble guarantee of a lasting peace. Time and reflection had increased the discontent, which was manifested by loud complaints when the treaty was made. It was believed that France, in this temper, would not view with indifference the contest between England and her colonies, nor forego so good an opportunity of contributing to weaken the power of a rival, against whom she had laid up heavy charges for a future adjustment.

Congress deemed it advisable, at all events, to act upon this presumption. They appointed three commissioners, Dr Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, "to transact the business of the United States at the court of France." They were furnished with the draft of a treaty, credentials, and instructions. The members enjoined secrecy on themselves in regard to these proceedings. Silas Deane was already in France, having been sent thither as a commercial and political agent, instructed to procure munitions of war and forward them to the United States, and to ascertain, as far as he could, the views and disposition of the French court. Arthur Lee was in England. Franklin made immediate preparations for his voyage. He left Philadelphia on the 26th of October, accompanied by two of his grandsons, William Temple Franklin and Benjamin Franklin Bache. They passed the night at Chester, and the next day embarked on board the continental sloop of war *Reprisal*, carrying sixteen guns, and commanded by Captain Wickes.

As a proof of Franklin's zeal in the cause of his country, and of his confidence in the result, it may be stated, that, before he left Philadelphia, he raised all the money he could command, being between three and four thousand pounds, and placed it as a loan at the disposal of Congress.

CHAPTER XXI.

MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO FRANCE.

FTER a boisterous passage of thirty days from the Cape of Delaware, the *Reprisal* came to anchor in Quiberon Bay, near the mouth of the Loire. After a detention of four days in the bay, Dr Franklin was set on shore with his grandsons at the little town of Auray. Thence he travelled by land to Nantes, a distance of seventy miles, where he arrived on the 7th of December. He stayed eight days at Nantes, and then set off for Paris, reaching that city on the 21st of December. He found Mr Deane there, and Mr Lee joined them the next day, so that the commissioners were prepared to enter immediately upon their official duties. Shortly afterwards, Dr Franklin removed to Passy, a pleasant village near Paris, and took lodgings in a commodious house belonging to M. Leray de Chamont, a zealous friend to the American cause. He remained at that place during the whole of his residence in France.

The commissioners were furnished by Congress, in the first place, with the plan of a treaty of commerce, which they were to propose to the French Government. They were likewise instructed to procure from that court, at the expense of the United States, eight line-of-battle ships, well manned

and fitted for service ; to borrow money ; to procure and forward military supplies ; and to fit out armed vessels under the flag of the United States, provided the French court should not disapprove this measure. They were, moreover, authorised to ascertain the views of other European powers, through their ambassadors in France, and to endeavour to obtain from them a recognition of the independence and sovereignty of the United States ; and to enter into treaties of amity and commerce with such powers, if opportunities should present themselves. It was expected that remittances would be made to them from time to time, in American produce, to meet their expenses and pecuniary engagements.

The French Government did not grant the ships of war requested by Congress, but the commissioners were informed, through a private channel, that they would receive two millions of livres in quarterly payments, to be expended for the use of the United States. At first it was intimated to them, that this money was a loan from generous individuals, who wished well to the Americans in their struggle for freedom, and that it was not expected to be repaid till after the peace. In fact, however, it was drawn from the King's treasury, and the payments of half a million quarterly were promptly made. The commissioners likewise entered into a contract with the Farmers-General, by which it was agreed to furnish them with five thousand hogsheads of tobacco at a stipulated price. One million of livres was advanced on this contract. Within a few months they were thus put in possession of three millions of livres.

With this money they continued to purchase arms, clothing for soldiers, all kinds of military equipments, and naval stores, which they sent to America. They built a frigate at Amsterdam, and another at Nantes. They also contributed

the means of supplying American cruisers that came into French ports. In these operations they were often embarrassed. Everything was done with as much secrecy as possible ; but Lord Stormont, the British ambassador, had spies in all the principal ports, and gained a knowledge of their proceedings. His remonstrances to the court were listened to, and were followed by orders for detaining the vessels which the commissioners had provided. Sometimes the goods would be taken out and put on shore, and at other times they would be stopped in their transportation from place to place. The American cruisers brought in prizes and effected sales. This drew fresh remonstrances from the British ambassador ; and on one occasion, Count de Vergennes wrote a letter to the commissioners censuring this conduct, and declaring that no transactions could be allowed, which infringed upon treaties. Knowing the actual disposition of the court, however, they were not deterred by these obstacles. They continued, by pursuing a prudent course, to ship to the United States all the articles they procured, which were of the utmost importance to the American army.

Dr Franklin had been but a few weeks in France, when he received from Congress a commission to treat with the court of Spain, with the proper credentials and instructions ; but, there not being sufficient evidence that his Catholic Majesty was ready, either to enter into a treaty with the United States, or to contribute essential aid for carrying on the war, he declined acting under the commission, and gave such reasons as were satisfactory to Congress. He consulted Count d'Aranda, the Spanish ambassador, who discouraged any immediate attempt to negotiate with his court.

Dr Franklin had been ten months in France before the court of Versailles manifested any disposition to engage openly in the American contest. The opinion of the ministers was divided on this subject. Count de Vergennes and Count Maurepas, the two principal ministers, were decidedly in favour of a war with England, and of bringing it on by uniting with the Americans. Some of the others, among whom was Turgot while he was in the Cabinet, disapproved this policy, and the king himself came into it with reluctance. Moreover, the events of the campaign of 1776 afforded little encouragement to such a step. The evacuation of Canada by the American troops, the defeat on Long Island, the loss of Fort Washington, the retreat of Washington's army through New Jersey, and the flight of Congress from Philadelphia to Baltimore, were looked upon in Europe as a prelude to a speedy termination of the struggle. This was not a time to expect alliances. The ability of the Americans to maintain the war for any length of time, as well as their union, spirit, and determination, was regarded as extremely problematical. The French Ministry feared, that, embarrassed if not discouraged by their difficulties, they would, sooner or later, yield to the force of old habits, and seek, or at least accept, a reconciliation with the mother country. This was the main reason, added to the obstacles thrown in the way by those who opposed a war on grounds of policy, why they did not at an earlier day enter into an alliance with the United States. Had this measure been premature, and, after an alliance was formed, had the Americans returned to their allegiance to the British King, the French would have found themselves in an awkward position, with a war on their hands against England, and the censure of the world upon

them for having recognised the independence and taken up the cause of insurgent colonists, who had neither the will, the resolution, nor the internal force to support the character they had assumed.

But the tide of affairs soon began to turn in another direction. In the campaign of 1777, the losses of the preceding year were more than retrieved. The capture of Burgoyne's army, and the good conduct of the forces under General Washington in Pennsylvania, gave sufficient evidence that the Americans were in earnest, and that they wanted neither physical strength nor firmness of purpose. On the 4th of December, an express arrived in Paris from the United States, bringing the news of the capture of Burgoyne and the battle of Germantown. The commissioners immediately communicated this intelligence to the French court. Two days afterwards, M. Gerard, the secretary of the King's Council, called on Dr Franklin at Passy, and said he had come, by order of Count de Vergennes and Count Maurepas, to congratulate the commissioners on the success of their countrymen, and to assure them that it gave great pleasure at Versailles. After some conversation, he advised them to renew their proposition for a treaty.*

* When some one mentioned to Dr Franklin, that General Howe had taken Philadelphia, he replied ; " You are mistaken ; Philadelphia has taken General Howe." And so it turned out, for the British were shut up in that city during eight months, and were at last obliged to retreat from it precipitately, without having derived any advantage from their conquest. Mr Bache and his family retired into the country when the enemy approached, and Dr Franklin's house was occupied by British officers. After the evacuation, Mr Bache wrote : " I found your house and furniture, upon my return to town, in much better order than I had reason to expect. They carried off some of your musical instruments, a Welch harp, a bell harp, the set of tuned bells

A memorial was accordingly prepared by Dr Franklin, signed by the commissioners, and presented to Count de Vergennes ; and, on the 12th, by the appointment of that minister, a meeting took place at Versailles between Count de Vergennes and M. Gérard on one part, and the American commissioners on the other, for the purpose of discussing the preliminaries of a treaty.

Count de Vergennes mentioned some objections, which were examined, but these related to points of secondary importance, without touching the fundamental articles. The minister remarked, that the relations between France and Spain were of such a nature, as to render it necessary to consult his Catholic Majesty before a treaty could be concluded, and to give him an opportunity to join in it, if he should think proper ; and that a courier would be immediately despatched to Spain, who would be absent three weeks.

Before this time expired, M. Gérard called again on the commissioners, and told them that the King, by the advice of his Council, had determined to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and to enter into a treaty of amity and commerce with them ; that it was the desire and intention of his Majesty to form such a treaty as would be durable, and this could be done only by establishing it on principles of exact reciprocity, so that its continuance should be for the interest of both parties ; that no advantage would

which were in a box, a *viola a gamba*, all the spare Armonica glasses, and one or two of the spare cases. Your Armonica is safe. They took likewise the few books that were left behind. Some of your electrical apparatus is also missing. A Captain André took with him the picture of you, which hung in the dining-room. The rest of the pictures are safe."—*July 14, 1778.*

be taken of the present situation of the United States to obtain terms, which they would not willingly agree to under any other circumstances; and that it was his fixed determination to support their independence by all the means in his power. This would probably lead to a war with England, yet the King would not ask, or expect, any compensation for the expense or damage he might sustain on that account. The only condition required by him would be, that the United States should not give up their independence in any treaty of peace they might make with England, nor return to their subjection to the British Government.

On the courier's return, it was ascertained that the King of Spain was not disposed to take any part in the business. The negotiators then proceeded without more delay, and their work was soon completed. In its essential articles the treaty was the same as the one that had been proposed by Congress.

When this was done, the French minister produced a draft of another treaty, called a Treaty of Alliance. The objects of this treaty were in some respects of much greater importance than those of the former. It was to be eventual in its operation, and to take effect only in case of a rupture between France and England; and it was designed to explain the duties of the two contracting parties in prosecuting the war, and to bind them to certain conditions.

The two treaties were signed at Paris on the 6th of February 1778. They were sent to America by a special messenger, and were immediately ratified by Congress. The event diffused joy throughout the country. Washington set apart a day for the rejoicings of the army on the occasion at Valley Forge. All saw, or believed they saw, that, whatever might be the hazards of the war, independ-

ence in the end was certain. France was too powerful a nation to be conquered, and she had promised her support to the last. Her interest and safety were deeply involved in the contest, and her honour was pledged. In the enthusiasm of the moment, every heart was filled with gratitude to the French King, and every tongue spoke his praise.

On the 20th of March, the American commissioners were introduced to the King at Versailles, and they took their place at court as the representatives of an independent power.

Madame Campan says, that, on these occasions, Franklin appeared in the dress of an American farmer. "His straight, unpowdered hair, his round hat, his brown cloth coat, formed a singular contrast with the laced and embroidered coats, and powdered and perfumed heads, of the courtiers of Versailles." The rules of diplomatic etiquette did not permit the ambassadors of those sovereigns who had not recognised the independence of the United States, to extend any official civilities to the ministers of the new republic. In private, however, they sought the acquaintance and society of Franklin, and among them were some of his most esteemed and intimate friends.

The French ambassador in London, as instructed by his court, informed the British Ministry that a treaty of amity and commerce had been concluded between France and the United States. This was considered tantamount to a declaration of war, and Lord Stormont was directed to withdraw from Paris.

The British ministers were now convinced that the contest with the colonists was likely to be of longer duration and more serious than they had apprehended. There was little doubt that Spain would soon follow the example of France. A reconciliation with the Americans, therefore, on

such terms as would comport with the dignity of Parliament and the interests of the Crown, was a thing most ardently to be desired. After warm debates in Parliament, it was resolved to despatch commissioners to treat with Congress, invested with such powers as, it was fondly hoped, would ensure their success.

In the meantime other measures were put in operation to effect the same end through the instrumentality of secret agents. Their advances were chiefly made to Dr Franklin. Even before the treaties were signed, an emissary of this description appeared in Paris, who endeavoured to obtain from him propositions which he might carry back to England. This was Mr Hutton, secretary to the Society of Moravians,—an old friend, for whom he had great esteem; a grave man, advanced in years, respected for his virtues, and possessing the confidence of persons in power. Franklin replied, that neither he nor his colleagues had any authority to propose terms, although they could listen to such as should be offered, and could treat of peace whenever proposals should be made. Mr Hutton returned to London, and immediately wrote to him, renewing his request for some hints or suggestions upon which he might proceed; and adding, that he believed everything satisfactory to the Americans, short of independence, might be obtained.

Mr Hutton was followed by Mr William Pulteney, a member of Parliament, who assumed in Paris the name of Williams, and who was understood to have come from Lord North, although not invested with any official character. He held a long conversation with Dr Franklin, and presented to him a paper containing the outlines of a treaty. Franklin told him at once that every plan of reconciliation implying a voluntary return of the United States to a

dependence on Great Britain was now become impossible.

"I see," he remarked, "by the propositions you have communicated to me, that the ministers cannot yet divest themselves of the idea that the power of Parliament over us is constitutionally absolute and unlimited; and that the limitations they may be willing now to put to it by treaty are so many favours, or so many benefits, for which we are to make compensation.

"As our opinions in America are totally different, a treaty on the terms proposed appears to me utterly impracticable, either here or there. Here we certainly cannot make it, having not the smallest authority to make even the declaration specified in the proposed letter, without which, if I understood you right, treating with us cannot be commenced."

The ministry were not discouraged by the failure of these attempts. Mr David Hartley, likewise a member of Parliament, was next employed on a similar mission; but he obtained no more satisfaction than his predecessors. ~~ff~~

When Hartley was on the point of leaving Paris, he wrote a note to Dr Franklin, in which he said: "If tempestuous times should come, *take care of your own safety*; events are uncertain, and men are capricious." "I thank you for your kind caution," said Franklin in reply; "but having nearly finished a long life, I set but little value upon what remains of it. Like a draper, when one chaffers with him for a remnant, I am ready to say, 'As it is only a fag end, I will not differ with you about it; take it for what you please.' Perhaps the best use such an old fellow can be put to, is to make a martyr of him."

Having now been in France eighteen months, Dr Franklin

had attracted around him a large number of personal friends. Among these were Turgot, Buffon, D'Alembert, Condorcet, La Rochefoucauld, and many others, who were conspicuous in the political, scientific, and literary circles of the great metropolis of France. When Voltaire came to Paris for the last time, to be idolised and to die, he expressed a desire to see the American philosopher. An interview took place. Voltaire accosted him in English, and pursued the conversation in that language. Madame Denis interrupted him by saying, that Dr Franklin understood French, and that the rest of the company wished to know the subject of their discourse. "Excuse me, my dear," he replied, "I have the vanity to show that I am not unacquainted with the language of a Franklin."

The business of the commissioners continued nearly the same as it had been before the treaty of alliance. There was more to be done in maritime affairs, because American vessels were then freely admitted into the French ports. Cases of capture and of the sale of prizes were referred to them for their decision. With the loans obtained from the French Government, and comparatively small remittances from America, they were enabled to refit public vessels, purchase military supplies for the army and navy of the United States, contribute to the relief of American prisoners in England, and pay the drafts of Congress. In all these transactions Dr Franklin found an able, zealous, and active coadjutor in Mr Adams.

Both Dr Franklin and Mr Adams had represented to Congress the inexpediency of employing three commissioners in a service, the duties of which might be discharged with equal facility and at less expense by one. In conformity with this suggestion, Dr Franklin was appointed

minister plenipotentiary to the court of France on the 14th of September. The commission was dissolved, and Mr Adams returned to America. Mr Lee stayed some time longer, holding nominally a commission to Spain, but never going to that court.

The British Ministry were still intent on some scheme of reconciliation. In May 1779, Mr William Jones, afterwards Sir William Jones, visited Paris. Dr Franklin had been acquainted with him in England as a member of the Royal Society, and an intimate friend of the Shipley family. Without openly avowing himself an authorised agent, he contrived to insinuate ideas, which may be presumed to have had their origin in a higher source. He put into Dr Franklin's hands an ingenious paper, which he called a *Fragment of Polybius*, purporting to have been taken from a treatise by that historian on the Athenian Government. It relates to a war in which Athens was engaged with the Grecian Islands, then in alliance with Caria. A close parallel is drawn between this pretended Grecian war and the actual war between England, France, and the United States. It ends with the plan of a treaty proposed by the Athenians, which, by merely changing the names of the parties, is intended to apply to the existing situation of the belligerent powers. The performance is elaborated with skill, and as a composition it shows the hand of a master. The terms were somewhat more favourable to the Americans than any that had been before suggested, but the idea of independence was not admitted.

Dr Franklin was ever ready to promote whatever could be useful to mankind. When Captain Cook's vessel was about to return from a voyage of discovery, he wrote a circular letter to the commanders of American cruisers, in

his character of minister plenipotentiary, requesting them, in case they should meet with that vessel, not to capture it, nor suffer it to be detained or plundered of anything on board, but to "treat the captain and his people with civility and kindness, affording them, as common friends of mankind, all the assistance in their power." This act of magnanimity was properly estimated by the British Government. After Cook's Voyage was published, a copy of the work was sent to him by the Board of Admiralty, with a letter from Lord Howe, stating that it was forwarded with the approbation of the King. One of the gold medals, struck by the Royal Society in honour of Captain Cook, was likewise presented to him.

Acts of a similar kind were repeated in other instances. There was a settlement of Moravian missionaries on the coast of Labrador, to which the Society in London annually despatched a vessel laden with supplies. Dr Franklin, at the request of Mr Hutton, granted a passport to this vessel, which was renewed every year during the war. He afforded the same protection to a vessel which sailed from Dublin with provisions and clothing for sufferers in the West Indies, contributed by charitable persons in that city.

When Paul Jones came to France, after his cruise in the *Ranger*, and his fortunate action with the *Drake*, a British sloop of war, the French Ministry planned a descent upon the coast of England by a naval armament combined with land forces. The Marquis de Lafayette, who had recently returned from America, where he had won laurels by his bravery and good conduct in two campaigns, was to be at the head of the expedition. Paul Jones was to command the squadron, under the American flag, and he received his instructions from Dr Franklin. The plan was changed, just

as it was on the point of being executed, in consequence of larger designs of the French Cabinet ; but Jones sailed with his little fleet some time afterwards, met the enemy, and gained a brilliant victory in the well known and desperate engagement between the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Serapis*. The task of settling the affairs of this cruise, of reconciling the difficulties between him and Captain Landais, who was the second in command, and of deciding on the conflicting claims for prize money, devolved on Franklin.

It had been a question much agitated both in France and America, since the treaty of alliance, whether it was advisable to send French troops to co-operate with the armies of the United States. The prudence of such an experiment was thought extremely doubtful. While fighting the battles of the mother country in former wars, the Americans had often been brought into conflict with the French on the frontiers. It was feared that prejudices had been contracted, and habits formed, which would prevent the troops of the two nations from acting together in harmony, even if the people themselves could be reconciled to the presence of a French army. All aids from France, it was said, would be the most effectually rendered in money and by a naval force. Such was likewise the view taken by the French Cabinet, and they acted upon this plan for two years. But many persons in the United States thought differently. They saw no reason, in the common principles of human nature, why a people should sacrifice their interests, and put their freedom in jeopardy, by giving themselves up to an inherited prejudice.

A conviction of the justness of this sentiment was deeply wrought into the mind of Lafayette. He had been a year and a half in the country, and, from the manner in which

he and other French officers were treated by all classes of people, he was satisfied that there would be no hazard in bringing an army of Frenchmen to co-operate with American soldiers. He conversed frequently with General Washington on the subject, and, although the opinion of the latter is nowhere explicitly recorded, it is certain that Lafayette returned to France fully convinced that such a measure would meet with approbation. He applied to the Ministers accordingly; who hesitated for some time, influenced by the same motives of prudence which had hitherto guided their counsels. But Lafayette persevered, and his zeal and the force of his arguments at last prevailed. In the early part of the year 1780, preparations were made for sending an army under Count de Rochambeau to America, with a fleet commanded by the Chevalier de Terney.

In all these transactions he was assisted by the advice and cordial support of Dr Franklin. They also procured large supplies of arms, equipments, and clothing for the American army. As the bearer of the good news, Lafayette sailed for the United States, authorised to concert measures with Washington and Congress for the reception and future employment of the French troops.

The northern powers of Europe, at the instance of Russia, had recently come into an arrangement respecting neutrals, which Dr Franklin so highly approved, that he issued orders to the American cruisers in conformity with it, even before he ascertained the views of Congress. By the practice of nations in the time of war, it had been a rule to seize the property of an enemy wherever found at sea; and neutral vessels having such property on board were captured under this rule, the cargo being confiscated as a prize to the captors, and the vessel being restored to

the owners. This rule was reversed by the combined powers, and the law was established, that goods belonging to an enemy on board a neutral vessel, except such as were contraband, should not be subject to capture, or, in other words, that *free ships should make free goods*. A law so clearly founded in justice and humanity could not but receive his hearty concurrence. In his opinion, the application of the law ought to be extended still further, so as to mitigate the evils of war as much as possible by leaving individuals to pursue their occupations unmolested.

“I approve much of the principles of the confederacy of the neutral powers,” said he, “and am not only for respecting the ships as the house of a friend, though containing the goods of an enemy, but I even wish, for the sake of humanity, that the law of nations may be further improved, by determining, that even in time of war, all those kinds of people, who are employed in procuring subsistence for the species, or in exchanging the necessities or conveniences of life, which are for the common benefit of mankind, such as husbandmen on their lands, fishermen in their barks, and traders in unarmed vessels, shall be permitted to prosecute their several innocent and useful employments without interruption or molestation, and nothing taken from them, even when wanted by an enemy, but on paying a fair price for the same.”

Privateering he called “robbing,” and “a remnant of the ancient piracy.” In an able paper on this practice, he shows its inhumanity, and condemns it as violating the code of morality, which ought to be sacredly observed by every civilised nation. “It behoves merchants to consider well of the justice of a war,” he remarks, “before they voluntarily engage a gang of ruffians to attack their fellow-

merchants of a neighbouring nation, to plunder them of their property, and perhaps ruin them and their families, if they yield it ; or to wound, maim, or murder them, if they endeavour to defend it. Yet these things are done by Christian merchants, whether a war be just or unjust ; and it can hardly be just on both sides. They are done by English and American merchants, who, nevertheless, complain of private theft, and hang by dozens the thieves they have taught by their own example." He proposed, that, in treaties between nations, an article should be introduced, by which the contracting parties should bind themselves not to grant commissions to private armed vessels ; and he was instrumental in forming such a treaty between Prussia and the United States. In fact, he was an enemy to war in all its forms and disguises. It was a maxim with him, that *there never was a good war, or a bad peace.*

By a straightforward course of conduct, asking only what was reasonable, with a becoming deference to the judgment and reliance on the good intentions of the ministers, Franklin won a reciprocal confidence, and was enabled to execute the arduous and complicated duties of his station with entire success.

In 1781 Dr Franklin proposed to retire from the public service, and requested that some other person might be appointed to supply his place. His reasons are given in the following extract from a letter to the President of Congress:—

"I must now beg leave to say something relating to myself ; a subject with which I have not often troubled the Congress. I have passed my seventy-fifth year, and I find that the long and severe fit of the gout, which I had the last winter, has shaken me exceedingly, and I am yet far

from having recovered the bodily strength I before enjoyed. I do not know that my mental faculties are impaired ; perhaps I shall be the last to discover that ; but I am sensible of great diminution in my activity, a quality I think particularly necessary in your minister for this court. I am afraid, therefore, that your affairs may some time or other suffer by my deficiency. I find, also, that the business is too heavy for me, and too confining. The constant attendance at home, which is necessary for receiving and accepting your bills of exchange, (a matter foreign to my ministerial functions,) to answer letters, and perform other parts of my employment, prevents my taking the air and exercise, which my annual journeys formerly used to afford me, and which contributed much to the preservation of my health. There are many other little personal attentions, which the infirmities of age render necessary to an old man's comfort, even in some degree to the continuance of his existence, and with which business often interferes.

“I have been engaged in public affairs, and enjoyed public confidence, in some shape or other, during the long term of fifty years, and honour sufficient to satisfy any reasonable ambition ; and I have no other comfort left but that of repose, which I hope the Congress will grant me, by sending some person to supply my place. At the same time, I beg they may be assured, that it is not any the least doubt of their success, in the glorious cause, nor any disgust received in their service, that induces me to decline it, but purely and simply the reasons above mentioned. And as I cannot at present undergo the fatigues of a sea voyage, (the last having been almost too much for me,) and would not again expose myself to the hazard of capture and imprisonment in this time of war, I purpose to remain here at least till the

peace; perhaps it may be for the remainder of my life; and if any knowledge or experience I have acquired here may be thought of use to my successor, I shall freely communicate it, and assist him with any influence I may be supposed to have, or counsel that may be desired of me."

Congress declined accepting his resignation, and, nearly at the same time, enlarging their commission for negotiating a treaty of peace, by joining with Mr Adams four other commissioners, they appointed Dr Franklin to be one of the number. He acquiesced in the decision of Congress. "It was my desire," said he, "to quit public business, fearing it might suffer in my hands through the infirmities incident to my time of life; but as they are pleased to think I may still be useful, I submit to their judgment, and shall do my best."



CHAPTER XXII.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE—RETURN TO PHILADELPHIA.



EARLY in the year 1782, the subject of peace began to occupy the attention of the British Parliament. The capture of Lord Cornwallis's army at Yorktown, the inability of the ministers to supply the place of these troops for another campaign, the fact that Holland had recently joined the belligerents against England, the enormous expenses of the war; all these things had contributed to open the eyes of the people, and to raise a general clamour for peace.

It was soon discovered in Parliament, that the public sentiment had communicated itself to that body, and that the overwhelming majority, which had sustained the ministers through the war, was greatly reduced, if not annihilated. The matter was brought to a trial by a motion of General Conway, that an address should be presented to his Majesty, praying that the war in America might cease, and that measures should be taken for restoring tranquillity and a reconciliation. The motion gave rise to a debate, which was animated on both sides, and it was finally lost by a majority of one only in favour of the ministers, and for continuing the war.

This vote was the signal for a dissolution of the Ministry.

Lord North resigned, and there was a total change of Ministry and measures. The new administration was formed in March. The Marquis of Rockingham was prime minister; the Earl of Shelburne and Mr Fox, the two principal secretaries of state. This Ministry came into power, as Mr Fox more than once declared in Parliament, with the express understanding, that the fundamental principle of their measures was to be "the granting of unequivocal and unconditional independence to America." For some time they seemed to act on this principle. The two secretaries corresponded directly with Dr Franklin on the subject of peace, and they sent Mr Richard Oswald over to Paris early in April, with authority to consult him on the mode of beginning and pursuing a negotiation. Mr Thomas Grenville was likewise sent to confer with Count de Vergennes in reference to the preliminaries for a general peace between all the powers at war. Nothing more could be done till Parliament should pass an act enabling the King to enter into a formal negotiation.

As to the mode of conducting the negotiations, Dr Franklin said he thought it would be best for the British agents to appear under separate commissions, one for the American treaty, and another for those of the European powers, since the topics to be discussed were entirely distinct; and as this mode would have greater simplicity, the object might be the sooner and more easily attained. The British Ministry approved and adopted this suggestion, and their envoys were accordingly furnished with separate commissions.

Both Mr Grenville and Mr Oswald, at their several interviews, assured Count de Vergennes and Dr Franklin, that the point of independence had been conceded, and that it

was to be granted, *in the first instance*, before the treaty was begun. It was agreed between the British and French Cabinets, that the negotiations should take place at Paris. Mr Grenville remained there. Mr Oswald went back to London, but returned in a few days. In the meantime Mr Grenville received a commission, which he understood to authorise him to treat with France and America ; but there was not a word in it about any other power than France. When this defect was pointed out to Mr Grenville, he said, that though his commission was silent in regard to America, yet his instructions gave him ample powers. Dr Franklin was not satisfied with this explanation, and he said that the commission must be put in a proper form for treating with the United States, or no treaty could be held. Finding him firm in this decision, Mr Grenville despatched an express to London with the commission, which came back so altered as to authorise him to treat "with France, or any other *prince or state*." This form was no more satisfactory than the other. On perusing it Dr Franklin told Mr Grenville, that "he did not think it could be fairly supposed that his court meant, by the general words *any other state*, to include a people whom they did not allow to be a state ;" and he refused to consider Mr Grenville as empowered to act in the American treaty under this commission.

After what had been said and repeated by Mr Oswald and Mr Grenville, of the readiness of the British Government to enter into a treaty on reasonable terms, this kind of shuffling displeased both Dr Franklin and Count de Vergennes. They began to suspect it to be an artifice to gain time, and that some recent successes in the West Indies had encouraged the court of St James to prosecute the war,

or, at least, to put off the treaty, with the hope of securing more favourable terms in consequence of these successes. There were, perhaps, some grounds for these suspicions, though the main difficulty arose, as soon appeared, from another cause. News arrived of the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, the dissolution of the British Cabinet, and the formation of a new one. This happened in July, the Rockingham administration having existed only two months and a half. The Earl of Shelburne was raised to the station of prime minister; Mr Fox retired, and the principal secretaries of state were Earl Grantham and Mr Townshend. The new Ministry being formed, however, under Lord Shelburne, he managed the peace in his own way.

The stipulations of the Americans were, as drawn up by Franklin, "First, Independence, full and complete in every sense, to the Thirteen States; and all troops to be withdrawn. Secondly, A settlement of the boundaries of *their* colonies and the loyal colonies. Thirdly, A confinement of the boundaries of Canada; at least to what they were before the last Act of Parliament, in 1774, if not to a still more contracted state, on an ancient footing. Fourthly, A freedom of fishing on the banks of Newfoundland and elsewhere, as well for fish as whales."

The *advisable* articles, or such as Franklin, as a friend, recommended England to offer, were, first, To indemnify many people who had been ruined by towns burnt and destroyed. The whole might not exceed five or six hundred thousand pounds. This sum, he thought great. "However," the doctor said, "though it was a large sum, yet it would not be ill bestowed, as it would conciliate the resentment of a multitude of poor sufferers, who could have no other remedy, and who, without some relief, would keep

up a spirit of revenge and animosity for a long time to come against Great Britain ; whereas a voluntary offer of such reparation would diffuse a universal calm and conciliation over the whole country." Secondly, Some kind of acknowledgment, in some public Act of Parliament, or otherwise, of Great Britain's error in distressing those countries so much as they had done. A few words of that kind, the doctor said, would do more good than people could imagine. Thirdly, Colony ships and trade to be received, and have the same privileges in Britain and Ireland as British ships and trade ; British and Irish ships in the colonies to be in like manner on the same footing with their own ships. Fourthly, Giving up every part of Canada.

The preliminary discussions occupied nearly three months before the negotiators were ready to enter upon the solid part of their work. Independence, the boundaries, and the fisheries were the three great points to be arranged. The first was settled at once. The boundary question was more complex ; it led to long discussions, to the examining of maps and ancient documents, and to such ingenious arguments and counter-arguments as diplomatists know how to use.

When, however, the negotiation seemed nearly at a close, the various propositions in the treaty having been carried back and forth by messengers between Paris and London, an effort was unexpectedly made by the British Ministry to extort better terms. They revived the question of the boundaries ; but it was their great object to obtain compensation for the Loyalists, or Tories, whose property had been confiscated, and many of whom had been banished from the country. If this could not be done, it was their next object to retain the fisheries as an equivalent. Mr Strachey went

over to Paris, and he and Mr Fitzherbert united their forces with Mr Oswald to push these points with all their might. At this time Mr Adams had joined his colleagues, having arrived in Paris near the end of October, a month before the treaty was signed. Coming fresh to the conflict, he exerted himself on every point with his usual ardour and energy ; and the British claim to the fisheries, in particular, was resisted by him with great strength of argument and a determined spirit.

Ultimately, after lengthened and profound discussions on every essential point, the treaty was finally arranged to the satisfaction of all, and it was signed at Paris by both parties in due form on the 30th of November 1782. It was approved and ratified by Congress, and received with joy by the people ; and the commissioners had the satisfaction, which has rarely fallen to the lot of negotiators, of finding their work applauded by the unanimous voice of a whole nation.

The most remarkable circumstance attending the treaty of peace remains to be noticed. The American envoys not only negotiated it without consulting the court of France, but signed it without their knowledge, notwithstanding they were pointedly instructed by Congress "to make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the ministers of our generous ally, the King of France, and to undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace or truce without their knowledge and concurrence ;" and notwithstanding the pledge in the treaty of alliance. "that neither of the two parties should conclude either truce or peace with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other first obtained." It is true that the treaty was only provisional, and was not to be ratified until France had likewise

concluded a treaty; but this reservation did not alter the nature of the act. When the American treaty was signed, it was not known to the commissioners what progress had been made by the French in their negotiation, or whether it was likely to be completed, or the war to continue. There was also a separate article, which was not intended to be communicated to the French at all, concerning the southern boundary of the United States, in case West Florida should be given up to the British in their treaty with Spain.

It was not strange that Count de Vergennes should complain of this procedure, and express himself with some degree of indignation when it was told to him, without any previous notice of such an intent, that the treaty had been signed. The commissioners, as a body, offered no explanation. This task was laid upon Dr Franklin, who executed it as well as he could, and with such success as to soften the displeasure of the French court.

It may be asked what motive could induce the commissioners to act in a manner apparently so unjustifiable. This question may be answered by a single word, *suspicion*; excited in the first instance by circumstances, which seemed to indicate some interested designs of the French; and fomented, from the beginning to the end of the negotiation, by the British envoys. Count de Vergennes and the French minister in Philadelphia had uniformly urged moderation on the Americans, with respect to their claims to the boundaries and the fisheries; and they recommended compensation to the Loyalists. The reason is obvious. The French had bound themselves to carry on the war, till a peace should be concluded, satisfactory to the Americans; and they feared that, if extravagant demands were put forth in negotiating a treaty, the pride of England would

not yield to them, and that the war would be protracted on this account, after all the other powers had gained their ends and were desirous of peace. But it was suspected that France could have no other aim than to secure certain advantages to herself at the expense of the Americans. If such a scheme had been formed, would not the French ministers have been silent till the time of action, instead of making their sentiments known, as they did, openly and on many occasions during the war, both in America and in France?

Whilst the treaty was in course of negotiation, Count de Vergennes and Dr Franklin entered into a contract, on the 16th of July, fixing the time and manner of paying the loans which the United States had received from France. The amount of these loans was then eighteen millions of livres, exclusive of three millions granted before the treaty of alliance, and the subsidy of six millions heretofore mentioned. These nine millions were considered in the nature of a free gift, and were not brought into the account. By the terms upon which the eighteen millions had been lent, the whole sum was to be paid on the 1st of January 1788, with interest at five per cent. As it would be inconvenient, if not impracticable, for the United States to refund the whole at that time, the King of France agreed that it might be done by twelve annual payments, of a million and a half of livres each, and that these payments should not commence till three years after the peace. All the interest which had accrued, or which should accrue previously to the date of the treaty of peace, amounting to about two millions of livres, was relinquished, and it was never to be demanded. This arrangement was generous on the part of the King, and highly advantageous to

the United States. The contract was ratified by Congress.

The great drama of the Revolution was thus closed. The sentiments expressed by Dr Franklin on this occasion, in a letter to his friend Charles Thomson, are worthy to be held in perpetual remembrance by his countrymen.

“Thus the great and hazardous enterprise we have been engaged in, is, God be praised, happily completed; an event I hardly expected I should live to see. A few years of peace, well improved, will restore and increase our strength; but our future safety will depend on our union and our virtue. Britain will be long watching for advantages, to recover what she has lost. If we do not convince the world that we are a nation to be depended on for fidelity in treaties; if we appear negligent in paying our debts, and ungrateful to those who have served and befriended us; our reputation, and all the strength it is capable of procuring, will be lost, and fresh attacks upon us will be encouraged and promoted by better prospects of success. Let us, therefore, beware of being lulled into a dangerous security, and of being both enervated and impoverished by luxury; of being weakened by internal contentions and divisions; of being shamefully extravagant in contracting private debts, while we are backward in discharging honourably those of the public; of neglect in military exercises and discipline, and in providing stores of arms and munitions of war, to be ready on occasion; for all these are circumstances that give confidence to enemies, and diffidence to friends; and the expenses required to prevent a war are much lighter than those that will, if not prevented, be absolutely necessary to maintain it.”

Franklin's great desire was now to return home, and to spend

the remainder of his days in the bosom of his family. This increased upon him so much, that he repeatedly and earnestly solicited his recall. Deeming his services of great importance to his country, Congress delayed to comply with his request, and he submitted patiently to their decision. When he first asked permission to retire, he meditated a tour into Italy and Germany. Through his friend, Dr Ingenhousz, physician to their Imperial Majesties, he received flattering compliments from the Emperor, and an invitation to visit Vienna. But he now found himself unable, from the infirmities of age and his peculiar maladies, to undergo the fatigues of so long a journey; and his only hope was, that he might have strength to bear a voyage across the Atlantic.

At length his request was granted, and Mr Jefferson was appointed to succeed him as minister plenipotentiary in France. He left Passy on the 12th of July in the Queen's litter, which had been kindly offered to him for his journey to Havre de Grace. This vehicle was borne by Spanish mules, and he was able to travel in it without pain or fatigue. Some of his friends accompanied him, and he slept the first night at St Germain. On the journey he passed one night at the chateau of the Cardinal de la Rouchefoucauld, and another in the house of M. Holker at Rouen; and he received civilities and complimentary visits from many of the inhabitants at different places. The sixth day after leaving Passy he arrived at Havre de Grace.


From that port he passed over in a packet-boat to Southampton. Here he was met by Bishop Shipley and his family, Mr Benjamin Vaughan, Mr Alexander, and other friends whom he had known in England. He also found here his son William, whom he had not seen for more than

nine years. In the Revolution William had taken the side of the Loyalists, and thus estranged himself from his father. He was now residing in England, where he spent the remainder of his life. Dr Franklin continued at Southampton four days, till July 27, when he embarked on board the *London Packet*, a Philadelphia vessel, commanded by Captain Truxtun. After a voyage of forty-eight days, without any remarkable incident, he landed at Philadelphia on the 14th of September 1785. He endured the inconveniences of the voyage better than he had expected, and without any apparent injury to his health. When he landed at Market Street wharf, he was greeted by a large concourse of the inhabitants, who attended him with acclamations to his own door. The joy of the people was likewise testified by the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon.



CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

S soon as his arrival was known, letters of congratulation were sent to him from all parts of the country. General Washington and Mr Jay were among the first to welcome him on this occasion. The Assembly of Pennsylvania was then in session, and, the day after he landed, an address was presented to him by that body, in which they congratulated him in the most cordial manner on his safe return. "We are confident," they observe, "that we speak the sentiments of this whole country, when we say, that your services, in the public councils and negotiations, have not only merited the thanks of the present generation, but will be recorded in the pages of history, to your immortal honour. And it is particularly pleasing to us, that, while we are sitting as members of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, we have the happiness of welcoming into the State a person who was so greatly instrumental in forming its free constitution." This was followed by similar addresses from the American Philosophical Society, and the Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. To all of them he returned brief and appropriate answers.

From some of his letters it would appear, that, when he

left France, he looked upon his public life as at an end, and anticipated the enjoyment of entire tranquillity and freedom from care, after he should be again restored to the bosom of his family. In this expectation, however, he was disappointed. He had been at home but a few days, when he was elected a member of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. This was a preliminary step to a higher advancement; for, when the Assembly met, in October, he was chosen President of the State, the office being equivalent to that of Governor in the other States. The choice was made by the joint ballot of the Assembly and Council. Under the first constitution of Pennsylvania, no individual could serve in the Council, or hold the office of President, more than three successive years, and he was then illegible for the four years following. Dr Franklin was annually chosen President till the end of the constitutional term, and each time by a unanimous vote, except the first, when there was one dissenting voice in seventy-seven. This unanimity is a proof, that, notwithstanding his great age and his bodily infirmities, he fulfilled the duties of the station to the complete satisfaction of the electors.

He was apparently at ease in his private circumstances, and happy in his domestic relations. He occupied himself for some time in finishing a house, which had been begun many years before, and in which he fitted up a spacious apartment for his library. In writing to a friend, he said, "I am surrounded by my offspring, a dutiful and affectionate daughter in my house, with six grandchildren, the eldest of whom you have seen, who is now at college in the next street, finishing the learned part of his education; the others promising both for parts and good dispositions. What their conduct may be, when they grow up and enter

the important scenes of life, I shall not live to *see*, and I cannot *foresee*. I therefore enjoy among them the present hour, and leave the future to Providence." Again, to another correspondent he wrote, "I have got into my *niche*, after being kept out of it twenty-four years by foreign employments. It is a very good house, that I built so long ago to retire into, without being able till now to enjoy it. I am again surrounded by my friends, with a fine family of grandchildren about my knees, and an affectionate, good daughter and son-in-law to take care of me. And, after fifty years' public service, I have the pleasure to find the esteem of my country with regard to me undiminished." Much of his time was devoted to the society of those around him, and of the numerous visitors, whom curiosity and respect prompted to seek his acquaintance. His attachments to the many intimate friends he had left in Europe were likewise preserved by a regular and affectionate correspondence, in which are manifested the same steadiness of feeling and enlarged benevolence, the same playfulness and charm of style, that are conspicuous in the compositions of his earlier years.

He was elected one of the delegates from Pennsylvania to the convention for forming the constitution of the United States, which met at Philadelphia in May 1787, and continued in session four months. Although he was now in the eighty-second year of his age, and at the same time discharged the duties of President of the State, yet he attended faithfully to the business of the convention, and entered actively and heartily into the proceedings. Several of his speeches were written out and afterwards published. They are short, but well adapted to the occasion, clear, logical, and persuasive. He never pretended to the accom-

plishments of an orator or debater. He seldom spoke in a deliberative assembly except for some special object, and then briefly and with great simplicity of manner and language.

After the members of the convention had been together four or five weeks, and made very little progress in the important work they had in hand, on account of their unfortunate differences of opinion and disagreements on essential points, Dr Franklin introduced a motion for daily prayers. "In the beginning of the contest with Britain," said he, "when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard ; and they were graciously answered. All of us, who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favour. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time ; and, the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that GOD governs in the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid ? "

These remarks afford some insight into Dr Franklin's religious sentiments. A good deal has been written on this subject, and sometimes without a due degree either of knowledge or charity. He was questioned about his religious faith, and replied as follows, only five weeks before his death ; "I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe ; that He governs it by His providence ; that He

ought to be worshipped ; that the most acceptable service we can render to Him is doing good to His other children ; that the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points of all sound religion, and I regard them as you do, in whatever sect I meet with them. As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think His system of morals and His religion, as He left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is like to see." This is the most explicit declaration of his faith which is to be found anywhere in his writings ; and although it is not very precise, yet it is far from that cold and heartless infidelity which some writers have ascribed to him, and for which charge there is certainly no just foundation.

At this time of his life he still retained his love for scientific pursuits ; and the following extract from a journal by the Rev. Manasseh Cutler, who had an interview with him, gives some interesting details :—

" He seemed extremely fond, through the course of the visit, of dwelling on philosophical subjects, and particularly that of Natural History ; while the other gentlemen were swallowed up with politics. This was a favourable circumstance for me ; for almost the whole of his conversation was addressed to me, and I was highly delighted with the extensive knowledge he appeared to have of every subject, the brightness of his memory, and clearness and vivacity of all his mental faculties, notwithstanding his age. His manners are perfectly easy, and everything about him seems to diffuse an unrestrained freedom and happiness. He has an incessant vein of humour, accompanied with an uncommon vivacity, which seems as natural and involuntary as his

breathing. He urged me to call on him again, but my short stay would not admit. We took our leave at ten, and I retired to my lodgings."

While the States were engaged in electing delegates to the convention, there was much speculation as to the results of the experiment, and political discussions abounded in all parts of the country. Partaking of the common impulse, a number of gentlemen in Philadelphia formed themselves into an association, called the *Society for Political Inquiries*, the design of which is well expressed by its name. Dr Franklin was chosen president, and the meetings were usually held at his house.

Dr Franklin's third and last year's service, as President of Pennsylvania, expired in October 1788. After that time he held no public office, although he was often consulted on public measures.

Some little difference took place between Franklin and Congress at this time about financial matters. Congress evinced some hesitation in passing his accounts, and his sensibility seems to have been keenly wounded. Several items were objected to, and Franklin wrote rather strongly, as follows:—

"It is now more than three years," said he, "that those accounts have been before that honourable body, and, to this day, no notice of any such objection has been communicated to me. But reports have, for some time past, been circulated here, and propagated in the newspapers, that I am greatly indebted to the United States for large sums that had been put into my hands, and that I avoid a settlement. This, together with the little time one of my age may expect to live, makes it necessary for me to request earnestly, which I hereby do, that the Congress would be

pleased, without further delay, to examine those accounts ; and if they find therein any article or articles which they do not understand or approve, that they would cause me to be acquainted with the same, that I may have an opportunity of offering such explanations or reasons in support of them as may be in my power, and then that the accounts may be finally closed. I hope the Congress will soon be able to attend to this business for the satisfaction of the public, as well as in condescension to my request."

This act of justice was not rendered. The accounts were never settled, nor was any allowance made for what he conceived to be equitable demands for extraordinary services.

The zeal with which he had promoted the first establishment of an academy in Philadelphia, forty years before, was revived during the last year of his life. He believed that the intentions of the original founders had not been fulfilled in regard to the English school connected with that institution, and that the study of Greek and Latin had gradually gained too great an ascendancy. He wrote a long and very interesting paper, in which he sketched a history of the Academy, with an account of the transactions of its founders and early supporters, claiming a larger attention than had hitherto been given to English studies, as well on the ground of utility as on that of the state of learning in modern times. Committees occasionally met at his house. One evening the conversation turned upon the study of the Greek and Latin languages in schools. Franklin was of the opinion that they engrossed too much time. He said that, "when the custom of wearing broad cuffs with buttons first began, there was a reason for it ; the cuffs might be brought down over the hands, and thus guard them from wet and cold. But gloves came into use, and the broad cuffs were unneces-

sary ; yet the custom was still retained. So likewise with cocked hats ; the wide brim, when let down, afforded a protection from the rain and sun. Umbrellas were introduced, yet fashion prevailed to keep cocked hats in vogue, although they were rather cumbersome than useful. Thus with the Latin language. When nearly all the books in Europe were written in that language, the study of it was essential in every system of education ; but it is now scarcely needed, except as an accomplishment, since it has everywhere given place, as a vehicle of thought and knowledge, to some one of the modern tongues."

At this time, Dr Franklin was seldom free from acute bodily pain ; but, during short intervals of relief, he wrote several other pieces, which exhibit proofs that his mind never acted with more vigour, or maintained a more cheerful and equable tone.

The state of his health and of his feelings may be inferred from a letter to President Washington, written on the 16th of September 1789, in which he speaks as follows :—

"My malady renders my sitting up to write rather painful to me ; but I cannot let my son-in-law, Mr Bache, part for New York, without congratulating you by him on the recovery of your health, so precious to us all, and on the growing strength of our new government under your administration. For my own personal ease, I should have died two years ago ; but, though those years have been spent in excruciating pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present situation. I am now finishing my eighty-fourth year, and probably with it my career in this life ; but, in whatever state of existence I am placed in hereafter, if I retain any

memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the esteem, respect, and affection, with which I have long been, my dear friend, yours most sincerely."

Washington's reply was cordial and affectionate. Between these two distinguished patriots, who served their country in different spheres, but with equal fidelity and devotedness, there was ever a sincere friendship and an entire confidence. When General Washington came to Philadelphia as a member of the national convention for forming the constitution, the first person he called upon was Dr Franklin; and when he passed through that city on his way to New York, where he was to be invested with the office of President of the United States, he paid him the same tribute of respect.

Although his malady and his sufferings continued, yet no material change in his health was observed till the first part of April 1790, when he was attacked with a fever and a pain in the breast. From that time he was constantly under the care of Dr John Jones, an eminent physician of Philadelphia, who wrote the following account of his illness and death:—

"The stone, with which he had been afflicted for several years, had, for the last twelve months of his life, confined him chiefly to his bed; and, during the extremely painful paroxysms, he was obliged to take large doses of laudanum to mitigate his tortures. Still, in the intervals of pain, he not only amused himself by reading and conversing cheerfully with his family and a few friends who visited him, but was often employed in doing business of a public, as well as of a private nature, with various persons who waited upon him for that purpose; and, in every instance, displayed not only the readiness and disposition to do good, which were the distinguishing characteristics of his life, but the fullest and

clearest possession of his uncommon abilities. He also not unfrequently indulged in those *jeux d'esprit* and entertaining anecdotes, which were the delight of all who heard them.

"About sixteen days before his death, he was seized with a feverish disposition without any particular symptoms attending it till the third or fourth day, when he complained of a pain in his left breast, which increased till it became extremely acute, attended by a cough and laborious breathing. During this state, when the severity of his pains drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe, that he was afraid he did not bear them as he ought; acknowledging his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had raised him, from small and low beginnings, to such high rank and consideration among men; and made no doubt but that his present afflictions were kindly intended to wean him from a world in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned him. In this frame of body and mind, he continued until five days before his death, when the pain and difficulty of breathing entirely left him, and his family were flattering themselves with the hopes of his recovery; but an imposthume which had formed in his lungs, suddenly burst, and discharged a quantity of matter, which he continued to throw up while he had power; but, as that failed, the organs of respiration became gradually oppressed; a calm, lethargic state succeeded; and on the 17th instant, (April 1790,) about eleven o'clock at night, he quietly expired, closing a long and useful life of eighty-four years and three months."

In a letter from Dr Rush to Dr Price, dated at Philadelphia, a week after this event, the writer says: "The papers will inform you of the death of our late illustrious friend Dr Franklin. The evening of his life was marked by

the same activity of his moral and intellectual powers, which distinguished its meridian. His conversation with his family, upon the subject of his dissolution, was free and cheerful. A few days before he died, he rose from his bed, and begged that it might be made up for him, so that he *might die in a decent manner*. His daughter told him, that she hoped he would recover, and live many years longer. He calmly replied, '*I hope not.*' Upon being advised to change his position in bed, that he might breathe *easy*, he said, '*A dying man can do nothing easy.*'—All orders and bodies of people among us have vied with each other in paying tributes of respect to his memory."

The funeral solemnities, which were of the most imposing character, and at which no less than 20,000 people were present, took place on the 21st of April. All the bells of the city were muffled and tolled; the flags of the vessels in the harbour were raised half-mast high; and discharges of artillery announced the time when the body was laid in the earth. Franklin was interred by the side of his wife, in the cemetery of Christ's Church. A plain marble slab covers the two graves, according to the direction in his will, with no other inscription than their names and the year of his decease.

When the news of his death reached Congress, then sitting in New York, a resolution was moved by Mr Madison, and unanimously adopted, that the members should wear the customary badge of mourning for one month, "as a mark of veneration due to the memory of a citizen, whose native genius was not more an ornament to human nature, than his various exertions of it have been precious to science, to freedom, and to his country." A similar resolution was passed by the Executive Council of Pennsylvania. The American Philosophical Society ap-

pointed one of their number, the Rev. Dr William Smith, to pronounce a discourse commemorative of his character and his virtues. Nor were such honours confined to his own country. By a decree of the National Assembly of France, introduced by an eloquent address from Mirabeau, and seconded by Lafayette and La Rochefoucauld, the members of that body wore a badge of mourning for three days, and the president wrote a letter of condolence to the Congress of the United States. A public celebration was ordered by the *Commune* of Paris, which was attended by a large concourse of public officers and citizens, and a eulogy was pronounced by the Abbé Fauchet. Many other testimonies of respect were shown by the different scientific and literary societies in Paris, and eulogies were written by some of their most distinguished members.

Dr Franklin was well formed and strongly built, in his latter years inclining to corpulency; his stature was five feet nine or ten inches; his eyes were gray, and his complexion light. Affable in his deportment, unobtrusive, easy, and winning in his manners, he rendered himself agreeable to persons of every rank in life. With his intimate friends he conversed freely; but with strangers and in mixed company he was reserved, and sometimes taciturn. His great fund of knowledge, and experience in human affairs, contributed to give a peculiar charm to his conversation, enriched as it was by original reflections, and enlivened by a vein of pleasantry, and by anecdotes and ingenious apoloques, in the happy recollection and use of which he was unsurpassed.

The strong and distinguishing features of his mind were sagacity, quickness of perception, and soundness of judgment. His imagination was lively, without being extrava-

gant. In short, he possessed a perfect mastery over the faculties of his understanding and over his passions. Having this power always at command, and never being turned aside either by vanity or selfishness, he was enabled to pursue his objects with a directness and constancy, that rarely failed to ensure success. It was as fortunate for the world, as it was for his own fame, that the benevolence of such a man was limited only by his means and opportunities of doing good, and that, in every sphere of action through a long course of years, his single aim was to promote the happiness of his fellow-men by enlarging their knowledge, improving their condition, teaching them practical lessons of wisdom and prudence, and inculcating the principles of rectitude and the habits of a virtuous life.

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